



SAR operation continues for boat tragedy survivors

Investigations ongoing to ascertain 'refugee' status of 14 individuals rescued in Malaysian waters, says home minister

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Sabahans give the thumbs-up

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Federal govt's decision not to appeal Sabah 40% revenue ruling hailed by people in the state as long-awaited affirmation of its constitutional rights, with some saying justice finally being acknowledged after decades of calls.

For many in the state, the move has rekindled hopes of finally seeing Sabah stand on equal footing with the rest of the country. - SUNPIX



CCTV rollout for fully residential schools 75% complete

Initiative part of efforts to strengthen student safety and improve monitoring in key areas within educational institutions.

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GRS to contest 55 seats in Sabah election

Of 51 candidates announced by the ruling coalition so far, 29 are incumbents and 22 new faces.

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Sabahans hail 40% revenue ruling as landmark moment

Residents see decision not to appeal as long-overdue step toward equal development and constitutional recognition

BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE
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KOTA KINABALU: The federal government's decision not to appeal the High Court ruling upholding Sabah's right to 40% of federal revenue collected from the state has been hailed as a watershed moment, a long-awaited affirmation of Sabah's constitutional rights.

For many in the state, the move has rekindled hopes of finally seeing Sabah stand on equal footing with the rest of the country.

Mohamad Jaafar, 57, a teacher from

Tenom, said it was time to move beyond legal victory towards constructive dialogue between the Federal and state governments.

"That was part of our long-standing demand. This issue must now be discussed again between Sabah and the federal government so that there's a win-win situation," he told *theSun* yesterday.

"We in Sabah genuinely need the revenue returns but it must be properly debated in Parliament, which is the best platform for such discussions."

He added that the people's voice must guide negotiations and that leaders representing Sabah should clearly explain what is being claimed and how the allocations will be channelled.

"There needs to be public consultation so that when negotiations happen, they reflect the people's will. I believe 90% of Sabahans still don't fully understand what is being demanded. Leaders must explain the mechanism and flow of funds from the federal government to the state," he said.

Rozie Liu, 23, a final-year student at

Universiti Malaysia Sabah, said the ruling felt like justice finally being acknowledged after decades of calls.

"Sabahans have demanded this for a long time, so now that the decision has been made, I think it's about time.

"Yes, the national economy is unstable and giving back 40% might be difficult, but it's not impossible. It just needs to start somewhere," she said.

Rozie added that despite higher living costs in Peninsular Malaysia, the development gap in Sabah remains a pressing concern.

"Here in Sabah, we're not only behind the Peninsula but even lagging behind our neighbour, Sarawak. I welcome this decision wholeheartedly. I just hope the federal government sticks to it and doesn't appeal."

Helson Abdullah, 34, a senior field assistant, said the ruling presents a vital opportunity to close the development gap.

"If the federal government doesn't appeal, that's great. We'll continue supporting the prime minister. But if they do, I hope the next state government after the 17th state

election will firmly oppose it.

"We need this revenue returned because we are poor. Just look around, there are still wooden schools in Sabah," he said.

Meanwhile, Sandakan resident and homemaker Noraziyani Abdullah, 42, said the matter should have been settled long ago.

"This should have been implemented earlier so that we could progress together with Peninsular Malaysia. In Sandakan, travelling to Kota Kinabalu used to take five hours, but now it's seven because of bad roads. Time seems to be moving backwards here."

She added that many parts of Sabah, especially rural areas, remain underdeveloped.

"Our towns are stagnant and our villages are worse. Development hasn't kept pace with the rest of the country."

The Attorney-General's Chambers, in a statement, confirmed that the decision was made during a special Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and attended by Attorney-General Datuk Mohd Dusuki Mokhtar.

PM to brief Parliament on decision not to appeal

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim will address Parliament today to explain the government's decision not to appeal the Kota Kinabalu High Court ruling on the "Special Grant" based on the 40% revenue share for Sabah, as provided under the Federal Constitution.

Anwar said the clarification will also cover the appeal concerning perceived flaws in the court's judgment.

He said the decision was reached by consensus after a special Cabinet meeting was held to deliberate on the matter.

"Following a special Cabinet meeting on Tuesday to review the Kota Kinabalu High Court judgment, we reached this decision after hours of deliberation, considering the views and proposals of each Cabinet member," he said.

He made the remarks at the Prime Minister's November gathering with staff of the Prime Minister's Department yesterday.

The gathering was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar.

Following the federal government's decision, the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) announced yesterday that negotiations with the Sabah Government will begin immediately.

The AGC said the federal government respected the principle of the 40% "Special Grant" enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

At the same meeting, the attorney-general also provided advice and views to the Cabinet on several defects in the judgment's reasoning, including allegations that the federal and Sabah governments had abused their powers and breached constitutional obligations said to have existed since 1974.

The AGC noted that the grounds of judgment also stated that the review after 2021 was unlawful, irrational and disproportionate.

On Oct 17, the Kota Kinabalu High Court ruled that the federal government had acted unlawfully and beyond its constitutional powers when it failed to fulfil Sabah's right to 40% of federal revenue for the years 1974 to 2021.

The decision was delivered by Judge Datuk Celestina Stuel Galid, who described the special grant



Anwar mingling with staff of the Prime Minister's Department in Putrajaya. — PIC COURTESY OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

arrangement between the federal and Sabah governments as "invalid, ultra vires and irrational" and in breach of the Federal Constitution.

The court also issued a mandamus order directing the federal government to conduct a revenue review with the Sabah Government under Article 112D of the Federal

Constitution to reinstate Sabah's right to 40% of revenue for each financial year from 1974 to 2021.

The order required the review to be carried out within 90 days, with a mutual agreement between both governments to be reached within 180 days from the date the order was issued. — Bernama

Sabah leaders laud move as historic milestone

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah leaders have hailed the federal government's decision not to appeal the Kota Kinabalu High Court ruling on the state's 40% revenue entitlement, describing it as a strong affirmation of Sabah's constitutional rights and the Madani government's sincerity in advancing state development.

Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah president Datuk Seri Arthur Joseph Kurup said the move reflected both respect for Sabah's

constitutional provisions and Kuala Lumpur's commitment to equitable development.

"I urge Sabahans to have faith in our prime minister and in this Unity Government, which has shown over and over again its genuine effort to help develop and protect Sabah," he said.

On Oct 17, the Kota Kinabalu High Court ruled that the federal government had acted unlawfully and beyond its constitutional powers by

failing to fulfil Sabah's right to 40% of federal revenue between 1974 and 2021.

The Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) later confirmed that no appeal would be filed against the decision.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor welcomed the decision, saying it showed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's understanding of Sabahans' aspirations.

Arthur further cited the

government's success at the International Court of Justice in fending off Sulu group claims and the delegation of autonomy to Sabah for projects under RM50 million as proof of federal commitment.

Sabah BN chairman Datuk Seri Bung Moktar Radin stressed that the 40% entitlement is a constitutional right, non-negotiable and non-delayable.

"This decision affirms a fundamental legal truth that Sabah's 40% revenue

Govt allocates about RM2b for pension adjustments

LUMUT: The federal government has allocated RM1.97 billion for the implementation of Phase 2 pension adjustments under the Public Service Remuneration System (SSPA), effective Jan 1, 2026.

Public Service Department director-general Tan Sri Wan Ahmad Dahlan Abdul Aziz said the move demonstrates the government's commitment to recognising retirees' contributions while providing financial relief to nearly one million pension recipients nationwide.

He said the initiative forms part of the government's ongoing efforts to safeguard pensioners' welfare, in line with the principle of well-being underpinning the values of Malaysia Madani.

"Pensioners are not left out when salary adjustments are made for serving civil servants. They will also receive the same adjustment based on their final pension amount.

"This clearly demonstrates the government's commitment to civil servants, including pensioners, and recognises their dedicated contributions throughout their service," he said after visiting pensioners at Taman Desa Bayu, Seri Manjung on Tuesday.

In August 2024, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced that officers from the Implementing, Management and Professional groups who opt for the SSPA scheme would receive a phased salary adjustment of 15%, with 8% in Phase 1 in December 2024 and 7% in Phase 2 in January 2026.

Wan Ahmad Dahlan said the Public Service Department continues to strengthen collaboration with state governments through the State Secretary's Office and the Retirement Fund (Incorporated) to ensure pensioners' welfare is managed holistically and sustainably.

"Through this partnership, services such as the MyPesara Counter, introduced in 2019 by the State Secretary's Office, remain an important platform to assist retirees with pension matters, cards and information updates.

"These initiatives complement programmes jointly organised by KWAP, including Jelajah MyPesara, which focuses on health, financial management and skills development to enhance their independence during retirement," he added. — Bernama

entitlement is not a political concession but a constitutional obligation left unfulfilled for decades," he said, adding that Sabah BN would monitor each stage of implementation to ensure accountability.

Meanwhile, Sabah PKR Leadership Council chairman Datuk Mustafa Sakmud described the move as a turning point for fiscal justice that Sabahans had been waiting for nearly half a century. — Bernama

CCTV rollout in residential schools 75% complete

➤ Initiative part of efforts to strengthen student safety and improve monitoring in key areas: Education Ministry

BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PETALING JAYA: About 75% of fully residential schools nationwide have completed the installation of CCTV systems under the Education Ministry's safety initiative, said Education Deputy Minister Wong Kah Woh.

He told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday that 149 out of 200 schools had been equipped with CCTV as part of efforts to strengthen student safety and improve monitoring in key

areas within school compounds.

Cameras have been installed in public zones, such as hostel corridors, stairways, dining halls, study rooms, ironing areas and isolated outdoor spots, but not in private spaces.

"The ministry stresses that CCTV will not be placed in bedrooms, toilets or changing areas as this could compromise students' dignity and privacy."

He added that each system has a price ceiling of RM15,000, with technical specifications and data storage requirements, including a minimum 30-day retention period, set by the ministry.

"SOP for installation, use and access to recordings have also been finalised to ensure a balance between safety and privacy."

"School administrators are responsible for maintaining all equipment and ensuring the systems function according to the prescribed technical standards," said Wong in response to a question from Khoo Poay

Tiong (PH-Kota Melaka), who had asked about the number of CCTVs installed under the initiative.

In a separate response to Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim (PN-Arau), who questioned how contractors were selected for the project, he said the procurement process was carried out transparently by state Education Departments through the government's ePerolehan system.

"The procurement is conducted openly by the respective state departments, district education offices or schools, depending on their circumstances."

"The ministry expects school administrators to monitor these assets responsibly so that safety measures remain effective," he said.

He reiterated that the ministry is committed to ensuring proper oversight of all safety-related infrastructure while maintaining transparency in its procurement procedures.



Cameras have been installed in public zones such as hostel corridors, stairways, dining halls, study rooms, ironing areas and isolated outdoor spots, but not in private spaces. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

Over 1,000 held for identification-related crimes

PETALING JAYA: A total of 1,377 individuals have been arrested and 1,368 prosecuted over the past five years for offences involving the misuse of MyKad and falsified birth certificates, the Home Ministry told Parliament.

In a written reply to Zahir Hassan (PH-Wangsa Maju) on Tuesday, the ministry said from 2021 until Oct 31, the National Registration Department (NRD) conducted 3,418 enforcement operations with various agencies to curb identification-related crimes.

"Of the total arrests, 843 prosecutions were made under the National Registration Regulations 1990 while 525 cases were charged under the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1957."

"The remaining nine cases did not result in prosecution."

Zahir had asked for the number of arrests and prosecutions involving MyKad misuse, including cases of identity theft and illegal sales.

The ministry revealed that 338 offences

were directly linked to MyKad misuse under Regulation 25(1)(e) of the National Registration Regulations 1990, which covers using another person's identity card or allowing one's own card to be used by others.

"A total of 232 cases involved the use of fake identity cards while 106 cases involved the use of another person's MyKad."

"A further breakdown shows that 172 cases involved Filipino nationals, 132 involved Indonesians and 34 involved individuals from other countries."

"Some of these cases have been tried and sentenced under existing laws while others are under investigation or pending prosecution."

The ministry said the NRD has set up a special investigation team to track down syndicates involved in the sale of forgeries, and misuse of identification documents.

Joint operations with enforcement agencies are also being intensified.

"Periodic integrated inspections, including surprise audits, are conducted to ensure full

compliance with established work procedures.

"At the same time, NRD continues to run public awareness campaigns urging Malaysians to safeguard personal documents, such as birth certificates and MyKad."

"A hotline and online complaint portal under the Home Ministry have also been introduced to enable the public to quickly report suspicious activity."

Under the Act, offences under Regulation 25(1)(e) provide up to three years' jail, a maximum fine of RM20,000 or both.

The provision criminalises the use of another person's identity card or allowing one's own card to be used by others, a regulation the ministry said is crucial to preserving the integrity of Malaysia's identification system.

"Every citizen must take responsibility for the security of their personal identification documents to prevent misuse that could threaten national security," the ministry added.

— BY FAIZ RUZMAN

Targeted programme lowers sale of subsidised diesel

KUALA LUMPUR: The sale of subsidised diesel has dropped significantly since the launch of the targeted diesel subsidy programme in June 2024, signalling early success in addressing subsidy leakages, said Finance Deputy Minister Lim Hui Ying.

She said before the initiative, average monthly sales of subsidised diesel between January and May 2024 stood at around 770 million litres.

After the programme began, the volume fell to about 465 million litres per month from June to Dec 2024 while commercial diesel sales increased, Bernama reported.

"The comparison between the two periods shows a significant drop in subsidised diesel sales, indicating a corresponding decline in subsidy leakages. This suggests that previously, subsidised diesel purchased from petrol stations may have been used for local commercial purposes, such as to power machinery and electric generators at construction sites or factories," she said during a Dewan Rakyat question-and-answer session yesterday.

Lim was responding to a supplementary question from Chong Chieng Jen (PH-Stampin) about the decline in subsidised diesel sales following fuel subsidy rationalisation.

She said the government now saves over RM400 million monthly, or about RM5 billion annually, allowing funds to be redirected to development projects and social support.

"As of Oct 31, about 320,000 beneficiaries, including private diesel vehicle owners, farmers, livestock breeders and smallholders, had received a total of RM850 million in payments."

For the land goods transport sector under the Budi Madani Diesel programme, she said as of Sept 30, 121,618 companies operating 355,074 vehicles had been approved for fleet card usage.

'Project performance below expectations'

PUTRAJAYA: The performance of development projects this year is less than satisfactory and requires improvement, said Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar.

He noted that RM85.87 billion was allocated for 9,524 projects, with RM64.03 billion spent, representing a national average of 74.56%.

He said of this amount, only 16 ministries have exceeded the national average.

"I urge each secretary-general to convene Ministry Development Action Council meetings as scheduled under Directive No. 1 of 2020."

Shamsul Azri said the country is preparing for the 13th Malaysia Plan, themed "Melakar Semula Pembangunan" (Redefining Development), for the 2026–2030 period.

"I urge all civil servants to make preparations. We need to be more innovative in coordinating efforts to implement over 120 strategies and more than 600 initiatives outlined."

He highlighted key 12th Malaysia Plan initiatives, including Sejahtera Madani, the Sekolah Angkat Madani and Kampung Angkat Madani adoption programmes and Sejahtera Madani.

"The Sejahtera Madani programme, aimed at building community economic capacity, has benefited 9,655 community groups nationwide, with allocations of RM590 million in 2024 and RM600 million this year."

He said Sejahtera Madani focuses on improving the socioeconomic status of households listed in the eKasih system.

"As of Oct 30, the Tabung Kesejahteraan Rakyat fund has collected RM64.10 million from 29 strategic partners for this programme."

For Kampung Angkat Madani, 219 villages are involved in 603 programme scopes covering infrastructure upgrades, new construction, social and educational facilities, electricity and solar supply, improved telecommunications access, and technical and vocational education and training, with allocations of RM177.34 million.

— Bernama

GRS to contest 55 seats in Sabah state election

► Candidates announced include 29 incumbents and 22 new faces

KOTA KINABALU: The Gabungan Rakyat Sabah (GRS) will be fielding candidates in 55 constituencies in the 17th state election.

Its chairman Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor said 51 candidates were announced on Tuesday, with the remaining four to be revealed yesterday.

"Of the candidates we announced, 33% are new faces," he said when announcing the candidates at the Sabah International Convention Centre here yesterday.

Of the 51 candidates announced, 29 are incumbents and 22 are new candidates, including the presidents of two GRS

component parties, namely United Sabah National Organisation president Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia, who will contest the Pintasan seat and Parti Cinta Sabah president Tan Sri Anifah Aman, who will contest Bongawan.

Hajiji, who is Parti Gagasan Rakyat Sabah president, will defend his Sulaman seat.

The Sabah chief minister said all GRS candidates contesting in the state election would uphold the aspirations of the people of Sabah, in a bid to ensure the continuity of the Sabah Maju Jaya development agenda, the foundation for building a more developed, progressive, prosperous and harmonious state.

"The Gabungan Rakyat Sabah family is ready to serve and dedicate itself to the people of Sabah.

"We will ensure victory in this election. God willing, with this spirit, we will once again lead

the Sabah government."

Hajiji said the candidates announced on Tuesday comprised a combination of experienced leaders and new faces, whom he believed could deliver victory for the ruling coalition.

"I hope that with the announcement of the candidates, Gabungan Rakyat Sabah supporters and component parties would work hard to ensure our candidates' success in the election.

"We will be contesting under one flag: the Gabungan Rakyat Sabah flag."

Parti Solidariti Tanah Airku also announced on Tuesday that it would contest 40 of the total 73 state seats, Bernama reported.

Its president Datuk Seri Dr Jeffrey Kitingan said 29 candidates were announced, while the remaining 11 are expected to be finalised soon.

Nomination for the state election is on Saturday and polling will be held on Nov 29.

Bill to amend skill development Act lauded

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has given its full backing to the National Skills Development (Amendment) Bill 2025, describing it as a "major leap forward" in modernising Malaysia's technical and vocational education and training (TVET) ecosystem.

The Bill, tabled for first reading in the Dewan Rakyat on Monday by Human Resources Minister Steven Sim, aims to update the National Skills Development Act 2006 to reflect the demands of today's workforce.

Key reforms include modular and micro-credential training, enhanced recognition of prior learning, and a restructured Malaysian Skills Certification pathway, all intended to make skill development more flexible, inclusive and industry driven.

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the amendments would finally recognise thousands of skilled and experienced workers who have long been overlooked.

"Many of these workers, such as mechanics, machinists, welders, electricians and technicians, are the backbone of Malaysia's industries, yet have never had the chance to gain formal certification.

"The amendment would allow their hands-on experience to be formally recognised, opening doors to better career mobility, employability and professional credibility."

Syed Hussain hailed the introduction of modular and micro-credential training as "timely and progressive", noting that it allows working adults to upskill without disrupting their jobs.

"This flexible and stackable structure enables workers to upgrade their skills at their own pace without affecting business operations or livelihoods.

"It is a smart way to accelerate Malaysia's shift towards a higher-skilled, more competitive workforce."

He also highlighted the restructuring of the Malaysian Skills Certification system, which would permit individuals to attain expert-level recognition and elevate the prestige of TVET qualifications to stand alongside academic pathways.

"This sends a powerful message that TVET is not a fallback but a first-choice career option," he said.



Syed Hussain said the introduction of modular and micro-credential training would allow working adults to upskill without disrupting their jobs. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

He praised plans to tighten accreditation and monitoring of training centres, ensuring only credible providers operate under the national framework.

"This step is essential to maintain confidence in Malaysia's training ecosystem and protect workers and employers from substandard or unrecognised courses," he said.

Syed Hussain added that the amendments demonstrate the government's commitment to making skills development more inclusive, accessible and aligned with industry needs.

MEF commended Sim and the Human Resources Ministry for engaging stakeholders and aligning the reforms with national workforce priorities.

"MEF reiterates its commitment to working

closely with the ministry, the Skills Development Department and industry partners to ensure the implementation of the amended Act achieves its goals.

"These goals are to empower Malaysian workers, enhance national productivity and sustain economic competitiveness."

He described the Bill as a "progressive leap forward" for Malaysia's human capital development agenda.

"It provides real opportunities for Malaysians to be recognised for their expertise, upgrade their skills flexibly and contribute more effectively to national growth.

"Empowering skilled workers through recognition and continuous learning is key to Malaysia's ambition of becoming a high-income, high-skill nation."

Tourism Malaysia partners with local, global brands

KUALA LUMPUR: Tourism Malaysia, under the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry, has partnered with around 70 local and international brands to promote Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026).

Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing said the collaboration aims to strengthen participation in boosting tourism awareness ahead of VM2026 while highlighting the role of homegrown businesses in supporting national economic growth.

"We are not only working with international brands but also with many local brands. We also welcome anyone interested in helping the nation promote VM2026," he told reporters after launching the Tourism Malaysia-Bask Bear Coffee partnership for VM2026 here on Tuesday.

He also urged Malaysians to view VM2026 as a national initiative that transcends political, racial and religious boundaries.

"Please do not politicise this. This is about our nation's economic growth, especially for the benefit of the people, including the B40 group and young people."

On what sets VM2026 apart from previous editions, Tiong said the ministry would unveil the full programme and its distinguishing features next month.

On Tuesday, Bask Bear Coffee and Toasties announced its support for VM2026 in a major sponsorship that benefits 100,000 foreign tourists and Malaysians through a unique plan that promises to shake up the coffee scene.

The brand would provide RM1.2 million worth of coffee to international visitors through a "Buy One Get One Free" promotion featuring its Gula Aren series, made with caramel-flavoured Aren sugar sourced from Borneo.

Malaysians can also join the Bask Bear Club to enjoy a free Americano daily for RM29 per month, with early subscribers receiving an additional month free, Bernama reported.

Loob Holding Sdn Bhd founder and CEO Bryan Loo said the partnership marks a milestone for the homegrown brand, allowing it to introduce tourists to authentic Malaysian flavours while rewarding loyal local customers.

Expressway extension to be done by 2029

KUALA LUMPUR: The RM1.7 billion New Pantai Expressway Extension project, which covers 6.4km along the main route or 15km in total, including directional ramps, connecting Pantai Dalam Toll Plaza to Jalan Istana, is expected to be completed and operational by 2029.

Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi said the project, part of the Kuala Lumpur Traffic Master Plan 2040, aims to ease congestion along the Pantai Dalam-Bangsar-Mahameru corridor.

"Once completed in 48 months, motorists could save up to 25 minutes when travelling from Bangsar or Mid Valley to Subang Jaya, thanks to improved road service levels."

Nanta said the highway is expected to boost local economic growth in Pantai Dalam, Bangsar and Lembah Pantai, spurring new opportunities in housing, commerce and services.

He said the project would be fully funded by New Pantai Expressway Sdn Bhd, a wholly owned subsidiary of IJM Corporation Berhad, without financial burden on the government.

"This is a prime example of a successful public-private partnership in sustainable infrastructure development."

On the implementation of the Multi-Lane Free Flow toll collection system, Nanta said six companies have expressed interest in bidding for the project.

"The system would be implemented on a business-to-business basis, allowing service providers to engage directly with existing highway concessionaires." — Bernama

S'wak to penalise drug syndicates under Sosma

KUCHING: Sarawak police will, for the first time, take action under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (Sosma) against drug dealers and syndicate members in the state.

Sarawak police commissioner Datuk Mohamad Zainal Abdullah said the move would be implemented as soon as possible, and the force is currently gathering information and statements related to the matter.

He added that police would not compromise with any drug traffickers or syndicate members, who were previously mostly arrested under the Dangerous Drugs Act.

"If there is sufficient information and evidence, we will take action under Sosma.

"This serves as a warning to those involved in syndicate and drug distribution.

"When action is taken under the organised crime provision, it would target not only major distributors but also smaller dealers to dismantle the entire network."

He told reporters this after paying a courtesy visit to Sarawak Minister of Women, Childhood and Community Wellbeing Development Datuk Seri Fatimah Abdullah on Tuesday.

Mohamad Zainal also said the use of Sosma is not new, as it has been employed in Peninsular Malaysia with proven effectiveness. – Bernama

Court concludes child testimonies

KOTA KINABALU: The Coroner's Court yesterday concluded the in-camera testimonies of 35 child witnesses in the inquest into the death of Form One student Zara Qairina Mahathir.

The witnesses, who began giving their testimonies on Sept 22 behind closed doors pursuant to the Evidence of Child Witness Act 2007 (Amendment 2024), completed their testimonies before Coroner Sessions Court Judge Amir Shah Amir Hassan, on the 36th day of the inquest.

Throughout the proceedings, media personnel were barred from the courtroom to protect the identities of the witnesses, in line with the Act, which expressly forbids the publication of any details that may identify a minor.

DPP Mohd Fairuz Johari, who is the inquest's conducting officer, confirmed that the last child witness had finished testifying.

He said the inquest hearing would resume next Monday, with nine teachers and the principal of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama Tun Datu Mustapha expected to testify.

Zara Qairina, 13, was pronounced dead at Queen Elizabeth Hospital on July 17. She was admitted a day earlier after being found unconscious near her school dormitory at 4am. – Bernama

Death toll from boat capsizes reaches 20, 14 injured

➤ All individuals found so far are Myanmar nationals, says home minister

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysian rescuers yesterday confirmed least 20 people dead and 14 injured after a boat carrying Myanmar nationals capsized in Thai waters north of Langkawi on Nov 9.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said 34 individuals have so far been accounted for but added that their status as refugees is yet to be

determined.

"For now, we are referring to them as 'individuals found'. Once the investigation concludes, we will determine their actual status and the appropriate next steps.

"So far, all those found are Myanmar nationals, some from displaced villages and others from refugee camps, travelling via ships and having made payments, with Malaysia as their intended destination.

"While many associate Myanmar with the Rohingya, other ethnic groups may also be involved. The police will confirm the exact composition through further investigations," he told reporters after visiting the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) search and rescue (SAR) operation site in Langkawi yesterday.

He said the SAR effort is ongoing

and he would personally inspect the search area.

The operation continues within Malaysian territorial waters, in coordination with Thai authorities who have confirmed finding seven bodies on their side of the border.

"For those found alive, investigations are ongoing to determine their origin, how and when they arrived, the total number of passengers, the location of the (capsize) and the purpose of their journey.

"We are also investigating whether syndicate activity was involved, including identifying agents and operational locations."

Saifuddin Nasution has also instructed the Kedah police chief to ensure no information is overlooked, adding that landing patterns and survivor interviews are critical to identifying any organised crime

involvement.

"Such crime is sometimes run by one or two individuals with the same objective, usually for financial gain, and that is something we are investigating.

"Our priority remains the SAR operation, to save lives or recover bodies, while concurrently reviewing all relevant legal provisions related to this case."

All the recovered bodies are undergoing post-mortem examinations at the Sultanah Maliyah Hospital in Langkawi, although logistical challenges remain due to limited facilities.

Survivors have received health checks and are being closely cared for.

He also highlighted the role of Langkawi as a hotspot, recording 217 landings this year alone compared with only 11 in 2023.

"MMEA was conducting routine patrols on Nov 1 in anticipation of landings. When information about the survivors and deceased arrived, the agency responded immediately.

"According to MMEA data from 2010 to 2025, nearly 2,300 individuals have been detained in Langkawi waters, highlighting its strategic significance due to proximity to Thailand."

Describing the *modus operandi* of the syndicate, Saifuddin Nasution said migrants are transported from villages or camps via ships and transferred to smaller boats near Malaysian or Thai waters.

"From November to March, the northeast monsoon brings rough seas. According to survivors, their boat capsized after transfer due to strong waves.

"The incident likely occurred near Tarutao, Thailand, four to five nautical miles from our border, and ocean currents carried them into Malaysian waters."

He added that the government is treating the tragedy seriously and would hold syndicates accountable.

"Those exploiting vulnerable people for profit will be fully prosecuted under the law."

The operation was initially launched after reports that one of three boats, believed to have been carrying about 300 migrants, capsized near Tarutao Island, close to the Thailand-Malaysia border.



Iman Sharif, 18, one of the survivors from the incident, eats rice after being rescued by MMEA personnel. – REUTERS/PIC

Malacca identifies 106 flood-prone locations

MALACCA: The Malacca Fire and Rescue Department has identified 106 flood-prone "hotspot" locations across the state that could be affected by heavy rain during the Northeast Monsoon, expected to begin today.

Its director Mohd Zaidi Ma'at said the locations, identified in collaboration with the state Department of Irrigation and Drainage, comprise 53 sites in Melaka Tengah, 27 in Alor Gajah and 26 in Jasin.

"Most of these flood-prone areas are those that frequently experience flooding during the (monsoon). Regular monitoring would be carried

out by the department and early warnings or announcements would be issued to the public to ensure they could evacuate safely.

"(The fire department) is fully prepared for the monsoon in all aspects, including assets, logistics, personnel and training. Our firefighters would be on the ground to help ensure effective flood response," he told reporters after the Malacca Fire and Rescue Department November assembly and launch of the monsoon preparedness programme on Tuesday.

He also said about 500 firefighters and officers from the rescue, operations, special and support units

are on standby and ready to be mobilised at any time during the monsoon period.

He added that the figure does not include volunteer and community fire brigades established across the state to provide early response in the event of disasters in their respective areas.

The fire department has also set up a Rapid Deployment Team to enhance response efforts to floods and other disasters, including in neighbouring states such as Johor.

"The team comprises 15 members from three units who are on 24-hour standby, equipped with assets and logistics such as lorries, aluminium

boats, life jackets and utility vehicles at the Ayer Keroh Fire and Rescue Station.

"If assistance is needed in neighbouring states, the Rapid Deployment Team must arrive at the flood or disaster site within three hours. Every year, we have a team ready to be deployed to neighbouring states."

The Malaysian Meteorological Department announced that the 2025/2026 Northeast Monsoon is expected to begin today and would continue until March next year, with five to seven episodes of continuous heavy rain forecast. – Bernama

Travelling **sushi showcase** rolls into KL

➤ Event to feature captivating visuals, interactive displays and digital experiences

KUALA LUMPUR: The Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur (JFKL) is bringing the travelling exhibition "I Love Sushi" to the city in order to showcase one of the most iconic dishes in Japan.

Organised in collaboration with the Japanese Embassy in Malaysia, the Urban Museum Kuala Lumpur (UR-MU) and Sushi Hibiki, the

initiative reimagines sushi as a cultural masterpiece, one that tells the story of Japan's creativity, craftsmanship and deep respect for nature's bounty.

The exhibition will be held from today to Dec 31 at UR-MU@The Toffee, The Project Room, Level 4.

Visitors will be able to immerse themselves in captivating visuals, interactive displays and digital experiences that trace the evolution of sushi from a centuries-old preservation method to the refined *nigiri-zushi* of the Edo period and the modern-day global sensation it has become today.

Designed to engage the eyes and palate, "I Love Sushi" promises a multi-sensory experience complete with a virtual reality (VR) "sushi shop",

educational screenings and exhibits showcasing the artistry behind every roll and slice.

Renowned as a sophisticated and nutritious meal, sushi exemplifies *washoku*, or Japanese cuisine, acknowledged by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) as an intangible cultural heritage.

In conjunction with the opening, JFKL will host a sushi-making demonstration and tasting session by Sushi Hibiki, featuring its owner and Japanese Cuisine Goodwill Ambassador Chef Makoto Saito Sam.

Saito, who is known for his culinary finesse and passion for promoting authentic Japanese cuisine in Malaysia, will also lead a talk session

offering a behind-the-scenes look into Japan's dynamic sushi culture.

He is instrumental in fostering excitement for Japanese food and culture in Malaysia. He initiated Sushi Summit, a Japanese culinary event that encourages partnership between fishmongers and fishery enterprises in the Tohoku area of Japan while creating Muslim-friendly Japanese dishes to ensure authentic food is available.

Starting his career at the age of 15 at a sushi restaurant in Tokyo, Saito has devoted his life to perfecting all elements of sushi.

At 35, he began a worldwide

adventure that led him to Malaysia, where he still advocates authenticity, ingredient quality and respect for individuals in the food industry.

Part of a decade-long world tour that began in 2022, "I Love Sushi" serves as a bridge of cultural exchange, reminding audiences that food, much like art, has the power to connect people across borders.

After its debut in Kuala Lumpur, the exhibition will travel to Terengganu and Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, for sushi lovers and cultural enthusiasts across Malaysia to get a taste of the timeless culinary story of Japan. – Bernama



Mohd Hadi putting the finishing touches to a batch of arrows at his workbench. – BERNAMAPIC

Entrepreneur draws income with handmade traditional arrows

MARANG: An interest in archery has brought opportunity to an enterprising coffee shop owner who has turned his hobby into a supplementary income through the sale of traditional arrows.

Mohd Hadi Rusli, 37, from Kampung Berangan Pak Ayu in Bukit Payung said he initially custom-made arrows for personal use due to compatibility and difficulty in finding the right specifications.

He added that, however, his craftsmanship drew the attention of his acquaintances over time because of the quality of his work.

"Initially, I made bows and arrows for my own use, but gradually, many friends showed an interest in made-to-order arrows.

"I started taking orders five months ago. So far, the demand has not been overwhelming but due to time constraints, I only produce three to four dozen arrows a month."

He added that his traditional arrows sell for between RM350 and RM400 per set of 12 arrows, depending on the type of wood used.

He also said the commonly used wood include pine and cedar, which are hardy and lightweight, making the arrows more durable.

"I usually use pine wood because it is easier to source in shops here (Terengganu) and is reasonably priced.

"The manufacturing process also goes through several stages, starting with splitting the wood, planing and painting.

"However, I must say that the most difficult part is shaping the round arrow shaft to a diameter of between seven and nine millimetres."

Mohd Hadi said in Terengganu, there are only about 10 traditional bow-and-arrow makers who run the business full-time or as a side income. – Bernama

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Prince Group denies link to scams

➤ Founder remains at large, says Justice Dept

PHNOM PENH: A Cambodian conglomerate whose founder has had more than US\$15 billion (RM62 billion) of allegedly ill-gotten assets seized said it “categorically rejects” claims he amassed his fortune running an internet scam empire.

A frenzy of asset confiscations in Europe, the United States and Asia have targeted Prince Holding Group with authorities alleging its founder Chen Zhi was running a

transnational criminal organisation.

The US Justice Department in October unsealed an indictment against the tycoon, accusing him of presiding over forced labour camps in Cambodia where trafficked workers conduct online scams.

US investigators seized around US\$15 billion worth of Bitcoin they allege are criminal proceeds – the largest forfeiture action in the Justice Department’s history.

Britain also froze business and property assets worth more than US\$130 million while Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong each swooped with national seizures as high as US\$350 million.

“The Prince Group categorically rejects the notion that it or its chairman Chen Zhi has engaged in any unlawful activity,” said the company on Tuesday.

“The recent allegations are baseless and appear aimed at justifying the unlawful seizure of assets worth billions of dollars,” added the statement – the first by the company since the crackdown began.

“We are confident that when the facts come out, the Prince Group and its chairman will be fully exonerated.”

One of Cambodia’s largest conglomerates, Prince Holding Group has operated across more than

30 countries with interests in real estate, financial services and consumer businesses since 2015.

The business empire is ubiquitous in the Southeast Asian country, boasting US\$2 billion in real estate investments, including a large shopping mall, Prince International Plaza, in the capital Phnom Penh.

The company said allegations against it “have caused undue harm to thousands of innocent employees, partners and communities who the group serves.”

But prosecutors accuse the company of being a corrosive influence – running elaborate online networks that target people with

romance or business cons and launder the proceeds through cryptocurrency.

Cyber-scam operations have mushroomed across Southeast Asia, often operating from unassuming office blocks or warehouses, where con artists target marks living on the other side of the world.

Some workers go willingly to the scam hubs, while others are trafficked and held in prison-like conditions.

The US Justice Department last month called Prince Group “one of Asia’s largest transnational criminal organisations” and said Chen, a joint British-Cambodian national, remains “at large.” – AFP

BRIEFS MYANMAR SCAM HUB LARGELY STANDING

YANGON: A declared military crackdown has left some destruction at a major scam compound in Myanmar, satellite images analysed by AFP show, but most buildings are still standing in pictures taken up to Sunday. The images from Planet Labs PBC were taken between Oct 30 and Sunday, and showed 22 buildings destroyed and some 80 damaged or probably damaged. There did not appear to be destruction in the complex’s central section. Jason Tower, senior expert at the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime, said the military was conducting a “PR stunt in KK Park” – creating the illusion of a crackdown. He said: “The military’s claims that it has dismantled scam syndicates are entirely false.” – AFP

FRESH BORDER CLASHES REPORTED

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia and Thailand traded accusations of fresh clashes along their border yesterday. Cambodian Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said “Thai soldiers opened fire on civilians”, wounding at least five in Prey Chan village of Banteay Meanchey Province. Richa Sukswanon, deputy spokesperson of the Royal Thai Army, said soldiers heard small arms fire from the Cambodian side around 4pm (5pm in Malaysia) but “did not return fire”. He said: “It is believed to be a provocation.” Cambodia’s Information Ministry shared images and video which it alleged showed wounded civilians, including one man being treated in an ambulance with a bloodied leg. – AFP

Australia, Indonesia agree to sign new security treaty

SYDNEY: Australia and Indonesia have agreed on a new security treaty that commits them to consult each other if either country is threatened, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in Sydney yesterday with President Prabowo Subianto.

Albanese, who accompanied Prabowo on a visit to an Australian

naval base in the city, said the treaty was a major extension of previous security deals, and commits to regular security dialogue between leaders.

“If either or both countries’ security is threatened, to consult and consider what measures may be taken either individually or jointly to

deal with those threats,” he said.

Indonesia and Australia recognised that acting together was the best way to secure peace and stability in the region, he said.

Prabowo told reporters that the treaty committed to close cooperation between the neighbours in defence and security fields.

“Our determination is to maintain the best of relationships to enhance and guarantee security for both of our countries,” he said.

Indonesia has a non-aligned foreign policy, pledging to befriend any country without joining any military bloc.

Foreign Minister Penny Wong said in a statement the treaty was expected to be signed next year. It was modelled on a 1995 security agreement between the two countries, she said.

The 1995 deal was withdrawn in 1999, after Australia led a UN peacekeeping force in East Timor, which was plunged into violence as it sought independence from Indonesia.

Once tense security ties have warmed under the centre-left Labor government of Anthony Albanese, who visited Jakarta in his first international visit after being re-elected in May.

Australia has recently sought to boost defence ties with its neighbours, striking a mutual defence treaty with Papua New Guinea to its north last month.

Unlike the PNG treaty, the Indonesia agreement does not commit to acting to meet common danger, said Euan Graham, a senior analyst for defence strategy at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

“Cynics could say it doesn’t really commit in any hard sense, it is more about raising the political symbolism of the relationship,” he said.

Albanese could show he had put the Indonesia relationship back on track, while for Prabowo it was “classic balancing behaviour”, showing he was keeping Australia happy if concerns were raised that Indonesia was tilting too much towards Russia or China, he said. – Reuters



Prabowo and Albanese fielding questions on board *HMAS Canberra* yesterday. – REUTERS/PICT

Thailand extradites gambling kingpin She Zhijiang to China

BANGKOK: Wanted gambling kingpin She Zhijiang was extradited to China from Bangkok yesterday, Thai police said, after a Thai court earlier this week upheld an order that followed a legal battle lasting more than three years.

She Zhijiang, 43, a Chinese national who also holds a Cambodian passport, was arrested by Thai police in August 2022 on an international warrant and an Interpol red notice requested by Beijing, which accused

him of running illegal online gambling operations.

A Thai criminal court ordered his extradition in May last year and another court upheld the decision on Monday after an appeal by She’s legal team.

“The Chinese have asked for this suspect, which is a high priority for China,” said Police Lieutenant General Jirabhop Bhuridej, an assistant commissioner-general.

She will be extradited to China to

stand trial for operating illegal casinos and gambling websites, as well as using Myanmar as a base for these illegal operations and to launder money, a Thai police statement said yesterday.

China, which had dispatched a plane to pick She up at Suvarnabhumi airport, expressed its gratitude to the Thai authorities for their handling of the case.

“This demonstrates the high level of our cooperation,” said Zhao

Mengtao, a counsellor at the Chinese embassy.

The two countries will strengthen their cooperation in tackling organised crime like online gambling and cyber scams, Zhao said.

Responding to the extradition, his lawyer Sanya Eadjongdee called the process “unusual”, but he did not elaborate. He said that She continues to deny any wrongdoing.

At the time of his arrest, She headed a gambling empire that

included a US\$15 billion (RM62 billion) casino, entertainment and tourism complex called Shwe Kokko on the Thai-Myanmar border.

The US Treasury Department in September sanctioned nine companies and individuals tied to Shwe Kokko for their links to regional scam and trafficking networks.

The border areas between Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia have become hubs for online fraud. – Reuters



Mastermind jailed for laundering bitcoin

➤ Legal battle continues over seized assets totalling US\$6 billion

LONDON: The mastermind of a vast Ponzi scheme in China, which conned nearly 130,000 investors, was jailed in Britain on Tuesday for over 11 years for laundering the proceeds of the fraud into cryptocurrency now worth billions of dollars.

Qian Zhimin pleaded guilty to two money laundering charges in September, after an investigation during which British police seized more than 61,000 bitcoin – currently worth over US\$6 billion (RM24.7 billion) – in one of the largest ever cryptocurrency seizures.

Qian wept in the dock as Judge Sally-Ann Hales sentenced her to 11 years and eight

months, saying: “You were the architect of this offending from its inception to its conclusion ... your motive was one of pure greed.”

Prosecutors said Qian and her co-conspirators spent more than US\$13.34 million on jewellery.

While the criminal proceedings have finished, there remains a looming legal battle over the fate of the seized bitcoin and how the victims of the fraud are repaid, with British prosecutors mulling a compensation scheme for victims.

Qian’s lawyers say she never intended to defraud anyone and that the “astronomic rise in the value of bitcoin means it will greatly exceed the amount needed to compensate victims”.

Qian, 47, changed her pleas on what was due to be the first day of her trial, admitting possessing and transferring criminal property. She previously claimed she was the target of a Chinese government “crackdown on successful crypto entrepreneurs”.

Prosecutors say Qian ran an investment fraud through her Lantian Gerui company between 2014 and 2017, into which around 128,000 people invested roughly US\$5.62 billion, about 6 billion of which was siphoned off. More than 80 people were convicted in China.

Qian fled China via Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Malaysia, before she flew to London on a St Kitts and Nevis passport and began trying to convert bitcoin bought with the proceeds of the fraud into cash, prosecutors said.

Some of the victims lost their life savings, homes or marriages, prosecutor Gillian Jones said on Monday. Chinese police attended a Lantian Gerui event in July 2017 to arrest Qian but she “managed to avoid being apprehended”.

Her helper Wen Jian – who was jailed last year for money laundering – sought to convert bitcoin into cash, including through the purchase of luxury goods on visits to European countries which did not extradite to China.

British police first encountered Qian in 2018, when they searched an address in London where she was living with Wen after the pair tried to buy a north London property.

Police seized devices containing around 61,000 bitcoin, but did not access them until 2021 when it was worth about US\$2.01 billion.

Wen was arrested in 2021 and charged in 2022, standing trial in 2023 but a jury could not reach verdicts. She was re-tried and convicted of one charge last year.

Prosecutors said that, as Wen was being re-tried, some bitcoin were moved from a wallet linked to Qian to an account set up by Ling Seng Hok, who replaced Wen as Qian’s helper. He pleaded guilty to entering into a money laundering arrangement.

This movement of bitcoin helped police track down Qian to an address in York, where she was arrested in April last year.

Ling was also sentenced on Tuesday to nearly five years. – Reuters

Xi pitches closer ties to Spanish king

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping told King Felipe yesterday that the world’s second-largest economy seeks to work with Madrid to boost the global influence of both nations, as the heads of state met in Beijing ahead of a signing ceremony.

Felipe is the first Spanish monarch in 18 years to make a state visit to China, as Madrid leads the European Union in courting Beijing and seeks to expand its diplomatic footprint across the Asia-Pacific region.

China, for its part, is eager to move past trade tension with the 27-strong bloc over its heavily subsidised electric vehicles industry, as President Donald Trump’s tariffs weigh on exports.

Last week China proposed the resumption of investment talks frozen since 2021.

“The world needs more constructive forces dedicated to peace and development,” Xi told Felipe during their meeting in Beijing’s Great Hall of the People, flagging change and turbulence in the international situation.

“China stands ready to work hand in hand with Spain to build a comprehensive strategic partnership,” Xi said, saying such ties would be more strategically steady, more dynamic and more influential globally.

State broadcaster CCTV said Xi and Felipe attended a document signing ceremony after the talks, but gave no details.

Madrid has stepped up economic engagement with Beijing after the EU’s decision to impose tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles in June last year.

It has sent Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez twice to promote Spain as an investment destination, particularly in automobiles, green technologies and other emerging industries.

The king offers Madrid another path, that of the subtle diplomacy a constitutional monarch



Xi welcomes Felipe during a welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. – AFP/IC

can wield, delivering messages that need not be pinned to the elected government when ties are strained or politically sensitive.

“The friendship between Spain and China undoubtedly benefits both peoples and is

consistent with two countries with a long history and a global vocation,” Felipe told his host.

“A relationship of trust has been forged.” – Reuters

Chinese hackers accused of probing key facilities

SYDNEY: Australia’s spy chief said yesterday hackers working for China’s government and military had probed the country’s telecoms network and key infrastructure, warning against the risk of economic disruption from sabotage.

China dismissed the remarks as a “false narrative”.

Mike Burgess, the director general of security for the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, said espionage was estimated to have cost the country A\$12.5 billion (RM33.8 billion) last year.

That included the loss of A\$2 billion in trade secrets and intellectual property, he told a business conference in Melbourne.

Burgess highlighted the threat of cyber sabotage, describing the activities of the hacking groups Salt Typhoon and Volt Typhoon, which he described as “hackers working for Chinese government intelligence and their military”.

He said: “We have seen Chinese hackers probing our critical infrastructure as well.”

In Beijing, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Burgess’s remarks “spread false narratives and deliberately provoked confrontation”.

China has made representations to Australia about them, said spokesperson Guo Jiakun.

Burgess said Salt Typhoon had not only penetrated US telecoms systems in a strategic spying operation but also has “been probing our telecommunication networks here”.

Volt Typhoon had an intention to disrupt operations, he said, and compromised US critical infrastructure to pre-position for potential sabotage.

Burgess warned of the impact of widespread telecoms disruption, in areas such as banks and transport, as well as cutting off supplies of water and power.

“I assure you; these are not hypotheticals – foreign governments have elite teams investigating these possibilities right now.”

Other potential scenarios included an Australian company being crippled as a trade competitor, or panic caused during an election, he said.

Chinese officials made complaints to the Australian government and private sector about ASIO whenever he spoke publicly about China, Burgess said during a speech last week at the Lowy Institute in Sydney.

“It won’t stop my resolve.” – Reuters

Top court blocks Russia from building new Canberra embassy

SYDNEY: Australia’s highest court yesterday blocked Russia from building a new embassy in the nation’s capital, unanimously upholding a law that cancelled its lease on national security grounds.

Russia owned a lease to a plot of land that is about 300m from Parliament House in Canberra and intended to build a new embassy building there to replace an older building elsewhere in the capital.

But in 2023, the Australian government introduced a law to cancel the lease after

receiving “very clear security advice as to the risk presented by a new Russian presence so close to Parliament House”, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said at the time.

Russia challenged the law at the High Court of Australia, arguing parliament was not authorised under the constitution to pass such a law.

The court ruled unanimously yesterday that the Home Affairs Act 2023 validly invoked parliament’s constitutional power to seize land on “just terms”, though it said Moscow was

entitled to compensation.

The Russian government secured a 99-year lease for diplomatic use of the site in 2008, paying A\$2.75 million (RM7.4 million).

Construction on the new site kicked off but was never completed. Russia’s existing embassy is in Griffith, a suburb.

Australia’s government argued that the lease’s cancellation was supported by parliament’s power to make laws for the nation’s territories, including the Australian Capital Territory. – Reuters

Ice age warning for Northern Europe

➤ Iceland responds to potential collapse of major current

COPENHAGEN: Iceland has designated the potential collapse of a major Atlantic Ocean current system a national security concern and an existential threat, enabling its government to strategise for worst-case scenarios.

The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, or AMOC, current brings warm water from the tropics northwards towards the Arctic, and the flow of warm water helps keep Europe's winters mild.

But as warming temperatures speed the thaw of Arctic ice and cause meltwater from Greenland's ice sheet to pour into the ocean, scientists warn the cold freshwater could disrupt the current's flow. A potential collapse of AMOC could trigger a modern-day ice age, with winter temperatures across Northern Europe plummeting to new cold extremes, bringing far more snow and ice.

The AMOC has collapsed in the past, notably before the last Ice Age that ended about 12,000 years ago.

"It is a direct threat to our national resilience and security," Iceland Climate Minister Johann Pall Johannsson said by email. "(This) is the first time a specific climate-related phenomenon has been formally brought before the National Security Council as a potential existential threat."

Elevation of the issue means Iceland's ministries will be on alert and coordinating a response, Johannsson said. The government

is assessing what further research and policies are needed, with work under way on a disaster preparedness policy.

Risks being evaluated span a range of areas, from energy and food security to infrastructure and international transport.

An Atlantic current collapse could have consequences far beyond Northern Europe. It could potentially destabilise longtime rainfall patterns relied upon by subsistence farmers across Africa, India and South America.

It could also contribute to faster warming in Antarctica, where sea ice surrounding the southern continent as well as ice sheets atop it are already under threat from climate change.

Scientists have warned that the world is underestimating the threat that an AMOC collapse could become inevitable within the next couple of decades as global temperatures keep climbing.

The Nordic Council of Ministers funded a "Nordic Tipping Week" workshop in October with 60 experts assessing how societies might be impacted. They are finalising recommendations from the meeting, organisers said.

"There is tonnes of research on the likelihood of when exactly things are going to happen," said Aleks Nummelin, a physical oceanographer at the Finnish Meteorological Institute.

"There is much less on what is the actual societal impact."

On Monday, scientists from more than 30 universities and international organisations sounded an alarm about the accelerated thawing of Earth's glaciers, ice sheets and other frozen spaces.

Other climate ministries and meteorological offices across Northern Europe told Reuters they are funding more research while weighing possible risks in their climate adaptation plans.

Norway's Environment Ministry said it was "seeking to deepen our understanding of the issue" before determining whether to classify AMOC as a security risk.

Britain said it was following scientific reports that suggested an abrupt collapse was unlikely during this century, while directing more than £81 million (RM439.5 million) into research to understand when the Earth's climate systems might be pushed to a point of no return.

"The science is evolving rapidly and time is running out to do anything about it because the tipping point may well be quite close," said oceanographer and climatologist Stefan Rahmstorf from Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

Iceland is not taking any chances, as the pace of warming speeds up and greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. "Sea ice could affect marine transport; extreme weather could severely affect our capabilities to maintain any agriculture and fisheries, which are central to our economy and food systems," Johannsson said.

"We cannot afford to wait for definitive, long-term research before acting." - Reuters



Protesters scuffling with guards on Tuesday. - REUTERS/PIC

Protesters force their way into summit venue

BELEM: Dozens of indigenous protesters forced their way into the COP30 climate summit venue on Tuesday and clashed with security guards at the entrance.

Protesters demanded access to the UN compound where thousands of delegates from around the world are attending this year's climate summit in Belem.

Some waved flags with slogans calling for land rights or carried signs saying, "Our land is not for sale."

"We can't eat money," said Nato, an indigenous leader from the Tupinamba community, who uses only one name. "We want our lands free from agribusiness, oil

exploration, illegal miners and illegal loggers."

Security guards pushed the protesters back and used tables to barricade the entrance. A witness saw one guard being rushed away in a wheelchair while clutching his stomach.

Another guard with a fresh cut above his eye told Reuters he had been hit in the head by a heavy drumstick thrown from the crowd. Security confiscated several long, heavy sticks.

The protesters dispersed shortly after the clash. They had been in a group of hundreds who marched to the venue.

Security guards later allowed delegates to leave the venue, having earlier asked them to move back inside until the area was clear.

Within the compound, the United Nations is responsible for security.

"Earlier this evening, a group of protesters breached security barriers at the main entrance to the COP, causing minor injuries to two security staff, and minor damage to the venue," a spokesperson said in a statement.

"Brazilian and UN security personnel took protective actions to secure the venue, following all established security protocols. Brazilian and UN authorities are investigating the incident. The venue is fully secured, and COP negotiations continue."

The main entrance to the venue had been closed for repairs. - Reuters

BRIEFS

UK HEALTH SECRETARY DENIES PLOT TO TOPPLE PM

LONDON: British Health Minister Wes Streeting denied yesterday he was plotting to bring down Keir Starmer, after unnamed allies of the prime minister briefed newspapers that they feared an attempted coup could come later this month after the budget. Several media outlets said the prime minister would fight any challenge to his leadership, with Streeting and Interior Minister Shabana Mahmood named as possible candidates to replace him. "That briefing is categorically untrue," Streeting told BBC Radio. Polls suggest Starmer is one of the most unpopular prime ministers and his party has trailed Nigel Farage's Reform UK party for months. - Reuters

TURKISH TROOPS KILLED IN GEORGIA PLANE CRASH

ANKARA: Turkey's Defence Ministry said yesterday that 20 soldiers were killed in the crash of its military aircraft in Georgia a day earlier, as inspectors continued to seek clues what caused the Nato member's cargo plane to go down. The C-130 plane took off from Azerbaijan for Turkey and crashed in Georgia on Tuesday. Ankara has not yet provided a reason for its deadliest military incident since 2020. It said Turkish and Georgian authorities began inspections at the site, in the Signaghu municipality of Georgia's Kakheti district. The C-130 Hercules is a cargo, troop and equipment carrier aircraft. It is described as a four-engine, turboprop military transport aircraft that can make use of unprepared runways. - Reuters

MACRON WARNS AGAINST WEST BANK ANNEXATION

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron warned on Tuesday that any Israeli plans for annexation in the West Bank would be a "red line" and would provoke a European reaction. He spoke as Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas visited Paris one month into a fragile truce between Hamas and Israel. Abbas, 89, is the head of the Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited control over parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and is being considered to possibly assume governance in Gaza under the deal. Macron, whose country in September recognised a Palestinian state, warned against any Israeli plans for annexation in the West Bank following an uptick in violence in the Palestinian territory. - AFP

ISRAELI SETTLERS ARRESTED AFTER CLASHES

BEIT LID: Israel's police and military said Tuesday that security forces arrested several Israeli settlers after violent clashes near the occupied West Bank city of Tulkarem, during which Palestinians were injured and property was destroyed. The military said it dispatched troops after "masked Israeli civilians attacked Palestinians and set fire to property". "Security forces dispersed the confrontation using riot dispersal means and apprehended several civilians", it said, adding that four injured Palestinians were evacuated for medical treatment. Police said four suspects were arrested "following the violent incident that occurred earlier today in the villages of Beit Lid and Deir Sharaf". - AFP

TANZANIA POLITICIANS IN SHOCK AFTER MASSACRES

NAIROBI: Tanzanian politicians are in shock over the massacre of hundreds of young protesters during its recent election, insiders told AFP, but are too afraid to speak out as a tiny cabal of hardliners around the president takes control. Gruesome images of dead Tanzanians have flooded the internet in the wake of the Oct 29 elections that triggered protests over government repression. President Samia Suluhu Hassan officially won with 98% of the vote, but key opposition leaders were jailed or disqualified. The opposition says more than 1,000 were killed as security forces crushed the protests under cover of a five-day internet blackout. The government has yet to give any casualty numbers. - AFP



Advancing digital justice in education

COMMENT
by Sharon Pasion Vinluan

ARTIFICIAL intelligence (AI) is transforming the way education is delivered across the world. Lessons that were once shared through chalk and paper are now mediated by screens, algorithms and cloud-based platforms.

From virtual tutors to intelligent grading systems, technology is reshaping how students learn and how educators teach in the 21st century.

Yet, as innovation progresses, a new inequality is emerging. The digital divide today is no longer just about who can access the internet; it is about who has the skills, confidence and knowledge to use it meaningfully.

This divide is about capability, representation and inclusion. It separates those who can harness digital tools for learning and research from those who are left behind, unable to participate fully in a fast-changing digital environment.

Behind every story about AI breakthroughs lies a quieter crisis of digital exclusion. Many communities remain disconnected, not only from the internet, but from the skills and opportunities that come with it.

The promise of technology as a tool to democratise learning and expand opportunity is at risk of becoming another source of inequality.

The digital promise and unequal reality

When the internet first became widespread, it was celebrated as the great equaliser. It was expected to bridge gaps in geography, class and opportunity. More than two decades later, this goal remains incomplete.

While millions of students around the world log in daily to online classrooms, others struggle with limited access, unstable connections and outdated devices.

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed this inequality clearly. In wealthier communities, families transitioned smoothly to online learning. In contrast, many students in rural or low-income areas faced blank screens and missed lessons.

Access to the internet alone is no longer enough. The new divide is about digital competence and the ability to use technology critically and productively. Without this, access



Bridging the digital divide requires more than providing devices and internet access. It demands a commitment to digital justice - an approach that ensures fairness, inclusion and ethics in every stage of digital development. – **ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN**

can remain superficial and may not lead to genuine participation or progress.

This article focuses on three major challenges shaping this evolving divide: algorithmic bias, data inequality and the second-level digital divide.

Algorithmic bias and data inequality

AI is now widely used in higher education. It supports grading, predicts student performance and screens applications for scholarships and admissions.

However, many of these systems are built on data that contains historical biases. As a result, they often reproduce the same social inequalities that exist in society.

Studies have shown that facial recognition tools are more likely to misidentify individuals with darker skin tones. Automated recruitment systems have filtered out women's résumés. Predictive models label students from lower-income backgrounds as "at risk" based on biased data rather than their actual potential.

This issue extends into research. Global academic databases often index publications

from Western institutions more extensively, giving higher visibility to knowledge produced in the Global North.

Research from Asia, Africa and Latin America remains underrepresented, creating a structural imbalance in how knowledge is recognised and shared.

To move towards fairness, institutions must demand transparency and regular audits for AI systems. Algorithmic fairness should be prioritised to ensure that technology supports inclusion rather than reinforcing discrimination.

The second-level digital divide

In the early years of digital transformation, the main question was who had access to the internet. Today, the more urgent question is who can use it effectively.

Many students spend long hours online but still lack the digital literacy to evaluate sources, use research tools or manage data privacy. They may know how to consume information but not how to analyse or create with it. This is called the second-level digital divide, which refers to inequality in skills rather than in access.

In universities, this gap has real consequences. A postgraduate student in Europe may use advanced AI-based software and cloud platforms for research. Another student in a developing country may depend on free tools with limited features. This results in a hierarchy of knowledge production, where those with stronger digital literacy and resources are more visible in academic discussions.

Governments and educational institutions must integrate digital literacy and critical thinking into curricula from an early stage. Students need to learn how to use digital tools responsibly, evaluate information accurately and apply technology for meaningful learning and research.

Digital access without digital literacy creates the illusion of inclusion.

Towards digital justice

Bridging the digital divide requires more than providing devices and internet access. It demands a commitment to digital justice - an approach that ensures fairness, inclusion and ethics in every stage of digital development.

Digital justice involves questioning who designs the technology, whose interests it serves and who benefits from its use. It calls for policies that promote equitable access, ethical AI governance and inclusive education that reflect diverse cultures and perspectives.

Education has always been described as the great equaliser but without digital justice, it could become the next great divider.

Shared responsibility

Policymakers, universities and technology developers must work together to build inclusive systems. Institutions should review their digital platforms for fairness and accessibility.

Educators must guide students not only in using technology but in understanding its social and ethical implications. The goal is not simply to connect everyone but also to ensure that everyone can participate fully and fairly in the digital age. Only then can technology truly fulfil its promise as a tool for empowerment.

Digital justice is essential for education that is inclusive, ethical and equitable. It is not an option but a responsibility.

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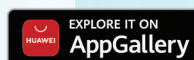


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COMMENT by Chin Yew Sin

Rebuilding society from nursery up

THE recent surge in school-related violence, bullying and tragic sexual assault cases across Malaysia has understandably ignited a nationwide debate.

The call for greater character building to be included in our primary and secondary school systems is a welcoming and timely move. It signals a national awakening to a deeper problem than cannot be solved by academic focus alone.

We also hear urgent calls for strengthening policies, boosting surveillance, bringing back canning and demanding greater transparency from institutions. While these reactive measures are often viewed as mere damage control, they are in fact crucial. They serve to raise immediate awareness of the severity of the crisis and prompt an awakening among institutions and the public.

However, the core message of prevention lies deeper. My background as a former working parent and now as someone with the time to observe the community leads me to a conviction that the national conversation must pivot from crisis management in formal schooling levels to character formation in the earliest years – the vital, yet often overlooked, ground-up formative period of early childhood education.

What we see today in our schools – the emotional cruelty, the inability to manage conflict and the shocking lack of empathy – did not simply happen overnight.

This crisis is the cumulative result of certain systemic failures and a sustained wrong focus on academic achievement at the expense of moral and social-emotional development.

“It is a well-established fact, corroborated by decades of expert analysis and developmental psychology, that the foundations of a child’s character – their capacity for empathy, emotional regulation and moral reasoning – are largely set long before they step into formal schooling.”

Building early foundation

For too long, the soft skills of kindness and compassion were viewed as secondary, optional extras in a hyper-competitive education system. It is time we acknowledge this long-term deficit.

It is a well-established fact, corroborated by decades of expert analysis and developmental psychology, that the foundations of a child’s character – their capacity for empathy, emotional regulation and moral reasoning – are largely set long before they step into formal schooling. This is the early formative period, from birth to age five or six, and it is here that we must make our greatest investment.

When we wait until later stages to address a child’s behaviour, the deep-seated emotional blueprints are already in place. We are not building a foundation, we are attempting a difficult, last-minute renovation.

For many of us who navigated the demands of raising children while working, the choice of an early childhood centre – be it a nursery or kindergarten – was perhaps the most pivotal decision we made.

Many of us selected nurseries

based on location, academic results or facilities. I was fortunate, by a stroke of luck, to find a nursery that accepted my daughter at 20 months. This institution was not defined by its flashcards or academic drills but by its core mission: love, care and giving.

I humbly attribute my daughter’s character today greatly to these formative years. My role, and that of my spouse, was merely a complementing force, reinforcing the good behaviours she learned. I vividly recall how, unlike other children we observed, she never fought over a toy and was always willing to offer her most treasured possessions to others. These early lessons in sharing and compassion were the seeds that grew into a life defined by service.

In her professional life, we see this formative influence consistently at work – it led her to choose to intern at UNHCR, caring for underprivileged refugees; it defined her legal path towards human rights and marriage reconciliation, championing the marginalised; and it guides her corporate career in compliance and good governance, where she champions ethics and integrity.

Even today, her deep-seated commitment continues as she leads a team providing free English tuition to B40 groups and takes the time to learn sign language. This is not a boast but a sincere appreciation for a nursery that understood its role was to nurture a heart and conscience first.

Replicating Japan’s early education system

Decades ago, Malaysia wisely benefited from the Look East Policy, which successfully brought us economic and technological advancements. However, in our pursuit of material success, we sadly overlooked the profound value of Japan’s system, which starts with character and discipline in the nursery.

In Japan, the early years of education (pre-primary) are focused not on reading or writing but on respect, kindness, independence and social responsibility.

It is not too late to look East again in this crucial aspect. The issue of violence, rape and bullying in our schools is a social illness that demands a holistic cure, not just a plaster.

The most impactful, proactive cure lies in the quality and character focus of our early childhood education (ECE) centres.

To those of us now retired: We have the time and perspective to become community advocates. Look beyond the political noise and support local ECE centres that explicitly prioritise love, care, kindness and emotional regulation over pure academic results. We must champion how they cultivate empathy and resolve conflict within our communities.

To the government and policymakers: Correcting this systemic failure requires political will and foresight. The government must officially recognise the pivotal role of ECE in national security and social harmony, moving beyond viewing them as mere childcare facilities.

While current tax reliefs are a good start – parents can claim a tax relief of up to RM3,000 for child care fees and registered ECE operators have previously benefitted from tax exemptions – deeper investment is necessary.

Focus on ECE centres

We must strengthen these existing incentives. Specifically, we should provide stronger funding for ECE centres, especially those serving the B40 and M40 communities, that commit to rigorous, evidence-based frameworks for social-emotional learning and character development.

Furthermore, we must mandate and strengthen the delivery of character education across all centres, ensuring that all teachers are trained as compassionate role models. This will take time, perhaps a generation, to fully correct the course, but it is never too late to begin building a more compassionate society.

If we wish to see a future where our schools are sanctuaries of safety, empathy and respect, we must stop focusing only on the locks on the gates. We must also turn our attention to the tiny hands and developing minds in the nursery, for it is there in the early formative years that we forge the character of the nation.

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Base MHIT: Protecting care without breaking savings

I MUST thank *theSun* for highlighting the debate on compulsory health savings and for interviewing experts on the potential impact of such schemes on lower-income households.

As Malaysia explores ways to improve health insurance coverage under initiatives like Reset and the base MHIT (Medical and Health Insurance/Takaful) product, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has repeatedly signalled the importance of sustainable, equitable financing.

Malaysians currently spend around RM30 billion annually on out-of-pocket medical costs, yet gaps in coverage leave many vulnerable.

The idea of a MediSave-style compulsory health savings account, modelled on Singapore, has captured attention. But the comparison misses a key distinction: Singapore’s MediSave is a personal savings mechanism while MediShield is the pooled risk system that actually ensures coverage.

Malaysia risks focusing on individual savings when what is truly needed is risk pooling that protects

families and eases public hospital congestion.

Compulsory deductions, EPF diversion or any new taxes may seem like quick solutions. Yet, using retirement savings or imposing new levies undermines long-term financial security and disproportionately affects low- and middle-income households.

EPF was designed for retirement, not short-term medical costs, and coverage extends to only about half of the population.

This is where the base MHIT product, under the government’s Reset initiative, offers a practical alternative. By providing affordable coverage for middle-income families, the base MHIT product enables access to private care without depleting savings or burdening public hospitals. It channels existing spending efficiently into pooled risk, protecting both individuals and the system.

Pre-emptively, some may question whether the base MHIT product is simply another cost to households. Participation is voluntary,



contributions are structured and the product complements government healthcare and EPF savings. It shifts the focus from individual savings to collective risk management, promoting equity and long-term sustainability.

Healthcare is a fundamental

human right. Malaysia cannot simply replicate Singapore’s model without considering local wage structures, informal employment and public institution capacity.

By prioritising affordable access, pooled risk and financial protection, Reset’s base MHIT product offers a

realistic path forward: freeing public hospitals, safeguarding retirement savings and expanding coverage for those who fall between subsidies and high-end insurance.

Wong Teck Jin
Selangor

Malaysians currently spend around RM30 billion annually on out-of-pocket medical costs, yet gaps in coverage leave many vulnerable.
— AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

Exchange 106 committed tenancies hit 75%

KUALA LUMPUR: Exchange 106, the iconic tower in the heart of the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX), has achieved 75% committed tenancies, securing 1.7 million sq ft of lettable space in total.

This leasing milestone, equivalent to filling four 30-storey office buildings, positions the development to reach its financial breakeven target by Q3'26.

"Achieving financial breakeven is both a financial and symbolic milestone," said Exchange 106 CEO Faris Najhan Hashim. "It reflects the strength of our tenant ecosystem and the resilience of our business model. As we continue to grow, we remain committed to elevating Malaysia's standing in the global commercial landscape."

The achievement was bolstered by the signing of a major expansion with existing tenant Urban Pinnacle Ventures Sdn Bhd, the Malaysian subsidiary of CHL Management (China). The new agreement for 134,000 sq ft brings their total leased space to nearly 250,000 sq ft, reflecting strong tenant confidence in the ecosystem at Exchange 106.

"Our expansion in Exchange 106 reflects our confidence in its world-class infrastructure, strategic location, and the progressive ecosystem it fosters within TRX," said Urban Pinnacle Ventures Sdn Bhd managing director Alex Hu. "This strategic synergy with Exchange 106's world-class infrastructure has helped attract a growing portfolio of financial and professional service tenants, fostering a more vibrant and international business community in the tower."

Strategically located within TRX, Exchange 106 offers unrivalled connectivity with direct access to the TRX MRT interchange, major highways, and an integrated ecosystem of retail, hospitality, and residential developments.

Tropicana remains one of top 10 developers in M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR: Tropicana Corporation Bhd has once again been honoured as one of Malaysia's Top 10 Developers, receiving the Top-of-the-Chart Award (Market Cap RM1 billion & above) at the Malaysia Developer Awards (MDA) 2025.

Co-created by the Malaysian chapter of the International Real Estate Federation (Fiaabci-Malaysia) and Star Media Group Bhd, MDA stands as one of the nation's most respected recognitions for property developers.

Tropicana CEO Ong Chou Wen said: "Tropicana has reinforced its position as a resort-style community planner and master builder since 1979, anchored on its eight distinct development DNAs and three ESG pillars. Winning this prestigious Top 10 Developers accolade at MDA 2025 is a proud recognition of Tropicana's dedication as a community builder."

The Top-of-the-Chart Award is divided into two categories, namely, the Top 10 for Market Capitalisation of RM1 billion and above, and the Top 10 for Market Capitalisation below RM1 billion. Tropicana was recognised for its track record in developing award-winning sustainable signature townships and developments across Malaysia.

Tropicana unveils Breeze Hill Shoppes at WindCity Genting

GENTING HIGHLANDS: Over the last 30 years, Gohtong Jaya has grown into a popular satellite town of Genting Highlands, welcoming more than 28.1 million visitors each year.

Fast becoming a self-sustaining township, Gohtong Jaya has become a highly sought-after commercial and residential address for visitors, investors, and developers who see its growth potential.

Catering to market demand, for the first time in three decades, Tropicana Corporation Bhd has introduced the brand-new Breeze Hill Shoppes @ Tropicana Avalon within Tropicana WindCity Genting Highlands, offering exclusive retail space within the well-connected and vibrant district.

This 6.7-acre green building integrated development officiated its groundbreaking ceremony in

Project marks Gohtong Jaya's first new shopping hub in 30 years – merging retail, homes and green design

Q1'25, and to date, has achieved 100% take-up on all its ground floor units, with limited units available on the first floor.

Marketing & sales and business development managing director Ixora Ang said: "Since 2020, Tropicana has strengthened its presence in Genting Highlands by introducing the right product offerings to meet market demand. Building on this success, we unveiled the next phase of the integrated Breeze Hill, an embodiment of luxury, modernity, and connectivity. The groundbreaking ceremony with

China State Construction Engineering Malaysia earlier this year marked the start of this landmark development. Envisioned as the future of modern hilltop living, Breeze Hill offers a work-live-shop-play concept, with retail units on the ground floor and residences above. The shoppes comprises 90 units across two levels, with prices starting from RM1.1 million, while the service apartments are two 27-storey towers with a total of 1,722 fully furnished units gauged to be priced from RM400,000 catering to investors, business owners, holidaymakers,

and lifestyle seekers. Properties around Gohtong Jaya have also recorded healthy rental yields of 8% and above."

Located on 6.7 acres of freehold land in Genting Highlands, Breeze Hill Shoppes and Service Apartments is a signature integrated development that seamlessly incorporates residential and retail spaces. It brings a brand new highland living standard, offering a dynamic and refreshing atmosphere with sustainable features, as it is targeted to be a GreenRE certified building.

Launching soon, the residential component – Breeze Hill Service Apartments – comprises two 27-storey towers with a total of 1,722 fully furnished units available in three layout types, from studio to 3-bedroom units. With a GDV of RM1.1 billion, prospective homeowners and investors can select units with an indicative price from RM400,000. Located beneath the residential component is the commercial section, Breeze Hill Shoppes, which consists of 90 units across two levels. The built-up sizes range from 959 sq ft to 3,470 sq ft, with prices starting from RM1.1 million. The commercial component has a GDV of RM250 million. These are the first set of new shop lots in the Gohtong Jaya area in the last 30 years.

This integrated development is an exciting mix of shoppes, serviced suites, and alfresco F&B while interspersed with green scapes and cool mountain air appealing to investors, business owners, holiday-makers, and lifestyle seekers. Highly accessible, the development is located within minutes of its surrounding amenities, which include Gohtong Jaya retail shops, Happy Bee Farm, Genting Highlands Premium Outlets, Awana Golf Course, Resorts World Genting, and more.



Breeze Hill Shoppes records 100% take-up for all ground-floor units, with limited units remaining on the first floor, highlighting robust demand in Genting Highlands.

Citaglobal launches Pahang's first solar smart homes

PETALING JAYA: Citaglobal Bhd's real estate subsidiary Citaglobal Property Development Sdn Bhd has launched D'Marina Bayu, Phase 2B of Residensi D'Marina — a pioneering solar-ready residential development in Pahang.

As the first solar-ready housing project in the state, and one of the few in Malaysia, the project shows Citaglobal's commitment to advancing new energy solutions, clean technology adoption, and low-carbon community development.

Residensi D'Marina is a joint development between Perbadanan PR1MA Malaysia (PR1MA) as the landowner, and Citaglobal Property as the developer.

Strategically located and connected via the Tanjung Lumpur

and Putra Bridges, D'Marina is envisioned as a holistic township — integrating nature, sustainability, and urban convenience.

As part of Citaglobal's drive to foster clean energy living, each home in D'Marina Phase 2B is solar-ready, enabling homeowners to install rooftop solar panels easily and unlock potential savings of up to 60% on electricity bills.

In addition, as part of Citaglobal's commitment to building future-ready communities, the project incorporates Fiber-To-The-Home infrastructure and integrated Smart Home-ready systems, allowing residents to enjoy seamless digital connectivity from the day they move in.

Phase 1 of D'Marina, comprising 523 single- and double-storey

terrace homes, was completed in December 2023. Phase 2A, which includes 136 units, was completed in May 2025 and is fully sold.

The newly launched Phase 2B, D'Marina Bayu, consists of 120 double-storey terrace homes and is slated for completion by December 2026. Future phases (2C to 2F), comprising 507 units in total, are currently in the planning stage and will be developed progressively.

Citaglobal executive chairman and president Tan Sri Dr Mohamad Norza Zakaria said: "With D'Marina, we reaffirm our commitment to the people of Pahang — to provide homes, strengthen communities, and foster a sustainable and inclusive future. The integration of solar-ready features in D'Marina underscores

Citaglobal's commitment to accelerating a clean energy future for Malaysia, empowering residents to enjoy long-term energy savings while supporting the nation's transition towards renewable and low-carbon community development."

As one of the few solar-ready residential developments in Malaysia, he added D'Marina reflects their goal of leading the energy transition through practical, people-focused innovation.

"We are deeply appreciative of collaboration with PR1MA, which has been central to this journey. Our partnership with PR1MA will ensure D'Marina remains accessible to the rakyat while setting new standards for modern, energy-efficient township living," he said.



Malaysia Pavilion unveiled at COP30

Country reinforces its commitment to achieve net zero by 2050

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia officially unveiled the Malaysia Pavilion at COP30, reaffirming the nation's determination to play an active role in addressing the global climate crisis.

Building on the progress made at COP29, the Pavilion reflects Malaysia's whole-of-nation approach and continued journey towards achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, while strengthening its leadership within the region.

Themed "Climate Action Now: Net Zero Pathways Unlocked", this year's Pavilion reflects Malaysia's steady progress.

Bringing together voices across government, industry, and civil society, the nation is advancing towards net-zero through strong governance and private sector commitment.

Standing proudly as one of the world's three great equatorial rainforest nations, Malaysia also champions biodiversity and nature-based solutions as integral pillars of its low-carbon transition.

As the Asean Chair of 2025, the country is further deepening regional collaboration, reflecting its wider 'whole-of-region' vision, by accelerating collective climate action and shaping a more sustainable future for all.

Building on the momentum from Malaysia's participation at COP29 in Baku, where the nation championed the "Shift for Sustainability - Climate Action Now!" narrative, COP30 marks an important step forward.

It will also highlight not only the country's ongoing progress but also the broader commitment to climate justice for vulnerable communities, innovative approaches to adaptation finance, and the delicate balance between conservation and sustainable development.

At COP30 the Malaysia Pavilion will spotlight five key thematic areas that embody Malaysia's net-zero transition - Restoring Rainforests, Rivers, and Reefs; Energy Transition Pathways for Developing Nations; Climate Justice in the Global South; Future-Proofing Water, Food Systems, and Industry and Unlocking Finance for Net Zero.



(From left) MGTC acting group CEO Saiful Adib Abdul Munaff, Nor Yahati and TNB CEO Datuk Megat Jalaluddin Megat Hassan cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony of the Malaysia Pavilion at COP30.

"As COP30 in Belém calls for an "Implementation COP", Malaysia comes prepared, moving decisively from pledges to measurable action. We aim to drive tangible and transformative change that will realise our aspiration of achieving carbon neutrality and securing a sustainable future for all," Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk Nor Yahati Awang said in a statement yesterday.

"Malaysia's participation at COP30 is a clear reflection of our commitment to global climate action.

"It underscores our dedication to advancing not only a whole of nation approach but also a whole of regional effort that unites our partners in the spirit of shared responsibility and cooperation," she added.

The Malaysia Pavilion will also host a series of high-level dialogues, panel discussions, report launches and collaborative sessions designed to advance regional and global conversations on climate resilience.

Key highlights include chapters themed

around Malaysia's strategic focus areas such as launch of Malaysia Pavilion; safeguarding our ecosystem; adaptation in action; anchored in resilience, igniting the energy shift; financing the future; synergy in sustainability, emerging voices for change, diverse green & blue economy, and a paradigm for progress.

The statement said the Pavilion brings together key national and international stakeholders, including Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB), the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Pos Malaysia, Yinson Holdings Bhd, Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, Amanah Lestari Alam, a subsidiary under Bank Pembangunan Malaysia Bhd, Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Air Negara, Air Selangor, the World Bank and Universiti Malaya.

The Malaysia Pavilion at COP30 is spearheaded by the NRES, in collaboration with its implementing agency, the Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Corporation (MGTC), and supported by leading national partners TNB and Maybank.

Property sector set for big digital transformation

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's property sector is set for a major digital transformation as the government accelerates the rollout of trusted digital infrastructure to enhance transparency, compliance and resilience.

Deputy Finance Minister Lim Hui Ying said the Finance Ministry is driving reforms to ensure that the property ecosystem, from valuation to financing, is integrated with verified data and secure transaction systems, strengthening investor confidence and protecting consumers.

"By introducing digital infrastructure that records, reconciles and reports transactions in real time, we are embedding trust within the system where records are consistent, data is verified and audit trails are secured.

"We are creating a market environment where both opportunities and responsibilities move together. Transparency becomes a foundation, not an afterthought," she said during the launch of PaymentXchange here yesterday.

PaymentXchange is an industry-endorsed transparent property payment platform focused on deposit protection, accountability and compliance practices for the Malaysian real estate market.

It is developed and operated by Infomina Geolytik Sdn Bhd and operates in tandem with ValuationXchange for a connected buyer-bank-valuer ecosystem, enabling an optional, streamlined loan and valuation journey.

Lim said fragmented and manual property transactions have long created inefficiencies, prolonged approvals and exposed the system to potential fraud.

Meanwhile, she said the initiative is in line with the government's fiscal priorities ahead of Budget 2026, which focus on tightening governance, reducing leakages and promoting private sector-led innovation that complements national development goals.

She also cited the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001 (AMLA) and Risk Management in Technology (RMiT) framework as key safeguards to ensure financial integrity, verifying identities and tracing funds moving through the property and financial ecosystems.

She added that a digitally verifiable property market would enhance Malaysia's global standing as a transparent and credible investment destination, especially at a time when international investors prioritise regulatory confidence and market integrity.

Meanwhile, Infomina Geolytik said in a statement that PaymentXchange connects property buyers with registered real estate agencies, ensuring deposits flow into the agencies' verified accounts powered by Chip Asia, a Bank Negara Malaysia-approved payment gateway. - Bernama

Southeast Asia's digital economy to top US\$300 billion by year end

SINGAPORE: Southeast Asia's digital economy is set to exceed US\$300 billion (RM1.2 trillion) by the end of this year after seeing strong growth over the past decade, according to a new report by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company.

The three companies launched the 10th e-Conomy SEA report on Nov 11, and expanded its coverage from earlier reports to include Brunei, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar for the first time, Vietnam news agency VNA reported.

It previously covered only Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Sapna Chadha, vice-president for Southeast Asia and South Asia frontier at Google, said that 10 years ago, the company projected the region's digital economy would reach US\$200 billion by 2025.

The region did not just meet this goal, which was surpassed three years ahead of schedule.

The report noted that revenue across the 10 countries is expected to

reach US\$135 billion as profitability accelerates.

The additional four countries accounted for about 2% of gross merchandise value, and had been added to provide a more holistic view of the region's evolving digital economy.

Gross merchandise value included sales in e-commerce, food delivery, transport, online travel, and online media, while revenue included those sectors as well as digital financial services, according to VNA.

E-commerce is the biggest segment,

and sales are expected to reach US\$185 billion this year, while revenue is projected to hit US\$41 billion.

Online travel was the next biggest segment of Southeast Asia's growing gross merchandise value, with growth supported by high airfares and accommodation rates as well as the relaxation of visa schemes.

The report also found a cautious uptick in private funding in Southeast Asia, which grew around 15% from a year ago to around US\$8 billion.

In the field of artificial intelligence

(AI), Fock Wai Hoong, Temasek's head for Southeast Asia, said that over US\$2 billion was invested in AI-related startups in the past year.

He noted that while most AI firms are based in Singapore, AI is clearly spreading across the entire region.

As the leading regional AI hub, Singapore secured US\$1.31 billion in private AI funding from the second half of 2024 to the first half of 2025.

Over the same period, it received 55% of all AI investments into the 10 Southeast Asian countries. - Bernama

BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: Poultry producer Farmiera Bhd is upbeat of the sector's outlook in 2026 on the back of steady demand for chicken which remains Malaysia's most affordable source of protein and consumption expected to rise with Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

Chief financial officer Chin Chien Hwi said poultry will continue to be the most affordable protein option for consumers, while higher tourist arrivals are expected to lift demand.

"So, as long as the population is there, 2026 is the tourism year with more tourists coming to Malaysia, we expect consumption to be higher," he said during a press conference in conjunction with its listing ceremony yesterday.

The company, which debuted on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia yesterday, said efficiency-focused operations will drive its next phase of growth.

Chin said Farmiera's upstream integration plan, including new parent stock farms and a hatchery, will strengthen supply stability and cost efficiency.

"Moving forward, we are continuously expanding our broiler farms to improve efficiency and strengthen our bottom line. We remain focused on our core poultry business and pursuing upstream integration to enhance profitability," he said.

The parent stock farm is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of 2026, with the supporting hatchery expected to be operational by the first half of 2027. At present, Farmiera sources all its day-old chicks from third-party suppliers.

Chin also expressed support for a liberalised market environment following the end of the chicken price subsidy on Nov 1, 2023.

"We are welcoming the open market because, after all, the open market means our results are based on our operational efficiency. So we welcome an open-market kind of supply and demand," he said.

Farmiera upbeat on poultry sector's 2026 outlook

➤ CFO says chicken remains most affordable protein option for consumers



(From left): Farmiera's Chin; purchasing & project development general manager Lim Kim Leng; sales & business development general manager Ong Chin Loong; farm operations senior general manager Tan Chin Heng; Lim; managing director/CEO Hong How Seng; executive director/deputy CEO Tan Kok Cheong; independent non-executive chairman Tang Yuen Kin; independent non-executive directors Nor Syahirah Abu, Koo Woon Kan and Adrian Chair Yong Huang.

Chin explained that chicken prices are subject to market forces such as supply and demand, and the company manages this by focusing on operational efficiency.

"Pricing is still determined by supply and demand.

"For us, we can only focus on operating

efficiency because that's how we cut costs and improve profit," he said.

The subsidy, introduced in February 2022, was aimed at stabilising chicken prices during the Covid-19 period, when labour shortages and feed costs disrupted supply.

Its removal was intended to boost domestic

production, reallocate fiscal savings to targeted welfare programmes, and prevent leakages to unintended beneficiaries.

The company's shares opened flat at 25 sen with an opening volume of 12.14 million shares, giving a market capitalisation of RM112.50 million.

Through the IPO, Farmiera has raised RM29.25 million through the issuance of 117.00 million new shares.

The proceeds will be utilised primarily to support the company's upstream vertical integration expansion, with RM12.55 million and RM9.60 million allocated for the construction of two new parent stock farms and a hatchery, respectively.

In addition, RM2.80 million will be used as working capital for day-to-day operations, while the remaining RM4.30 million is earmarked for listing-related expenses.

The company operates 15 self-owned farms and 44 contract farms across Peninsular Malaysia, supported by processing facilities in Lukut and Ipoh with a combined daily capacity of 45,000 broilers.

Its operations are halal- and MeSTI-certified, and the counter is Syariah-compliant.

For FY2024, Farmiera recorded RM561.1 million in revenue and RM7 million in net profit, up from RM535.8 million and RM6.4 million, respectively, in FY2023.

Key ASIC eyes profitability as AI demand fuels strong turnaround

BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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KUALA LUMPUR: Fabless semiconductor company, Key ASIC Bhd, is confident of returning to profitability in the current financial year, buoyed by growing demand for artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) chips as well as improved cost efficiency.

The company posted a 26% quarter-on-quarter increase in revenue to RM6.04 million in the first quarter of financial year 2026 (FY2026), up from RM4.80 million in the previous quarter, driven by repeat AI ASIC shipments and expanding design service billings.

On a year-on-year basis, revenue rose 60% from RM3.78 million recorded in Q1 FY2025.

Executive chairman and CEO Eg Kah Yee said the group has significantly narrowed its losses as a result of disciplined cost management and better margins from higher-value ASIC design projects.

"In the last quarter, we lost only about RM100,000 in operating terms, including depreciation and amortisation. This compares to losses of around RM4 to RM5 million in the same quarter a year ago," Eg said during a post-AGM media briefing yesterday.

"We have done a lot of improvement in terms of cost optimisation and improving margins through higher-value products and services. Moving forward, we are looking at profitability in FY2026."

Eg said Key ASIC's transformation from a technology developer to a commercially scaling AI solutions provider has positioned it to benefit from the global AI boom.

"The fiscal year 2025 marked a major turning point for Key ASIC. Our 21 granted

patents and 19 pending approvals in AI, IoT and chip design form the technological backbone of our next-generation ASICs and AI products," he said.

Key ASIC's AI chips and algorithms are currently deployed in medical imaging and diagnostic applications, contributing to early detection of retinal and other diseases. The company has also secured repeat orders for its proprietary AI ASICs used in edge and medical AI applications and has been awarded a multi-year ASIC design contract worth RM10 million, expanding its recurring revenue streams.

Eg said the company's core focus areas remain AI-related communication chips and IoT chips, which are increasingly used in everyday technologies such as smart homes, facial recognition systems and electric vehicles.

"The automotive industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors for chip demand. An EV today can contain as many as 5,000 chips for automation, voice control, sensors and safety features. Every advancement in automation creates new demand for AI chips, and we are focusing our technology on meeting that," he said.

Eg, who founded Key ASIC in 2005, said the group's business remains entirely export-driven, with customers across Europe, China, Japan and other regions, as Malaysia currently has limited demand for semiconductor design services.

Looking ahead, the group expects sustained revenue growth supported by a solid order pipeline for AI ASIC and design projects, the commercialisation of new patented low-power AI chips, and collaborations in the medical AI and industrial automation sectors.

Regulatory hurdles pose challenges as UCrest pushes medtech growth

KUALA LUMPUR: UCrest Berhad is charting steady growth in the digital healthcare sector, reporting higher earnings and outlining plans to strengthen its artificial intelligence (AI) and telemedicine platforms despite the challenges of navigating complex healthcare regulations.

For the financial year ended May 31, 2025 (FY2025), the group recorded a 13.8% increase in revenue to RM18.12 million compared with RM15.93 million a year earlier, while profit after tax rose 13% to RM4.73 million. Earnings per share improved to 0.636 sen, reflecting the scalability of its digital healthcare business model powered by its proprietary iMedic platform.

Speaking after the company's 28th Annual General Meeting, chairman and CEO Eg Kah Yee said the company's recent proposal for a private placement of RM4.9 million will help fund its research and development initiatives, particularly in clinical validation and regulatory compliance for its medical technologies.

"Healthcare is one of the most regulated industries and rightly so. But for companies like ours, the cost of developing, validating and certifying medical technology can run into millions," Eg said.

"Clinical trials and medical device approvals are necessary steps to ensure safety and accuracy. These processes require significant funding and time, so the private placement will support our efforts in that area."

Eg explained that clinical trials alone could cost several million ringgit, involving hospitals, clinical research organisations and qualified investigators. The process typically spans two to three years before a device or digital health product can receive full regulatory approval.

Despite these challenges, UCrest is moving ahead with its AI healthcare solutions, including iMedic Optics, an AI-powered retinal image analysis system capable of detecting diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and age-related macular

degeneration. The company also launched the iMedic E-Commerce Platform, enabling clinics, pharmacies and healthcare providers to sell prescribed medicines, supplements and wellness products online.

Eg said these innovations will allow UCrest's partner clinics to expand their services and reach patients more efficiently through integrated digital platforms.

"Our iMedic platform helps clinics operate both offline and online, offering medical consultations, prescription renewals and product sales within the same ecosystem," he said. "This creates new recurring revenue streams for clinics and strengthens the overall healthcare network."

UCrest's strategy focuses on markets with stronger private healthcare demand, particularly in English-speaking countries and regions such as Singapore, China, the Middle East and Russia, where its iMedic system already supports multiple languages including English, Chinese, Arabic and Russian.

The company also continues to build partnerships internationally, including a multi-year collaboration with Singapore Paincare Holdings Ltd, which has become the first clinic chain in Singapore equipped with full iMedic e-commerce capability.

Eg said UCrest will continue to expand in markets where digital health adoption is accelerating, supported by rising healthcare awareness and the demand for AI-driven medical tools.

"We're focusing on making healthcare delivery smarter and more accessible," he added. "Our goal is to integrate AI, data analytics and telemedicine into everyday clinical practice."

UCrest remains optimistic about its growth outlook, underpinned by recurring revenues from its digital health services and the expanding use of AI in medical diagnostics.

— by Deepalakshmi Manickam

Bursa, brokers boost cyber resilience measures

➤ New cybersecurity framework to fortify stockbroking ecosystem and investor confidence

KUALA LUMPUR: Bursa Malaysia Bhd in collaboration with Malaysia's stockbroking industry, announced a series of cyber resilience enhancements to strengthen the integrity of the stockbroking ecosystem.

These enhancements are outlined in a recommendation paper developed as part of the industry's collective response to the unauthorised trades incident in late April 2025 (Recommendation Paper).

The Recommendation Paper is the collective output of an industry working group formed in June 2025, comprising representatives from both bank-backed and non-bank Participating Organisations (POs), as well as cybersecurity experts.

Chaired by Bursa Malaysia chief regulatory officer Julian M Hashim, the industry working group was tasked with assessing current industry cybersecurity practices to identify vulnerabilities, developing industry-wide standards for information technology (IT) risk management and incident response, as well as recommending regulatory and operational improvements.

Bursa Malaysia CEO Datuk Fad'l Mohamed said, "Our priority is to protect investors and uphold the trust they place in our securities market. These enhancements represent the industry's commitment to every investor that cybersecurity safeguards are taken seriously, and are of prime importance. By strengthening the cyber resilience of the stockbroking ecosystem, we are actively taking steps to fortify the marketplace where investors can trade with confidence, knowing their investments are protected against cyber threats."

Meanwhile, Julian remarked, "The Recommendation Paper reflects the industry's promise to act collaboratively. The enhancements outlined are designed to be both actionable and scalable – ensuring that all brokers, regardless of size or complexity, can adopt them meaningfully."

The finalised Recommendation Paper, issued to brokers on Tuesday following an industry briefing session, has been reviewed by independent cybersecurity experts to ensure its robustness and alignment with best practices.

Bursa Malaysia will adopt a two-pronged oversight approach to guide the implementation of the enhancements, focusing on enhancing Bursa Malaysia's IT



Bursa Malaysia steps up efforts to protect investors and strengthen market confidence. – **BERNAMAPIX**

Security Standards for brokers by incorporating the recommended cybersecurity and regulatory standards outlined in the Recommendation Paper, and strengthening the Exchange's oversight of Independent Software Vendors (ISV) which are Order Management Systems (OMS) providers. The recommendations are broadly aligned with the Securities Commission Malaysia's Guidelines on Technology Risk Management, and Bank Negara Malaysia's Risk Management in Technology framework.

The Recommendation Paper aims to raise industry-wide cybersecurity standards and resilience by setting clear expectations for brokers, including the responsibility to exercise effective oversight over their third-party technology service providers – such as ISV that provide OMS – to ensure compliance with Bursa Malaysia's requirements.

The enhancements are grouped into nine key pillars, forming a comprehensive framework for cybersecurity and regulatory controls. These include:

➤ **Security access controls:** To ensure that access to systems, applications, and data is appropriately restricted based on user roles and responsibilities, thereby minimising unauthorised access and safeguarding sensitive information.

➤ **Threat detection and protection:** To proactively identify, monitor, and respond to potential cybersecurity threats through the deployment of robust detection mechanisms and protective controls, thereby reducing the risk of system compromise and data breaches.

➤ **Patch management:** To ensure timely identification, testing, and deployment of

software patches and updates, reducing vulnerabilities and maintaining the security and stability of IT systems.

➤ **Infrastructure and operational resilience:** To ensure the continuity, reliability, and robustness of IT infrastructure and operations by implementing resilient architecture, redundancy measures, and recovery capabilities that minimise downtime and disruption in the face of adverse events.

➤ **Recovery planning:** To establish structured and tested recovery procedures that enable timely restoration of critical systems and data should there be a disruption, ensuring minimal impact on business operations and maintaining service continuity.

➤ **Oversight of technology service providers:** To ensure that third-party technology service providers adhere to the brokers' and regulators' cybersecurity and operational standards, thereby minimising external risks and maintaining accountability across outsourced functions.

➤ **Incident management:** To establish a comprehensive framework for identifying, reporting, managing, and resolving incident in a timely and effective manner, thereby minimising impact and supporting continuous improvement through post-incident reviews. The incidents could include cybersecurity breaches, system outages, data loss and other operational disruptions.

➤ **Training and awareness:** To foster a security-aware culture by providing ongoing education and targeted training to both internal personnel and external stakeholders, equipping them with the knowledge to effectively recognise or detect, thwart, and respond to IT and cybersecurity risks effectively.

➤ **Dedicated cybersecurity role establishment:** To ensure that cybersecurity responsibilities are formally assigned to qualified personnel, whether through internal appointments and/or external engagements, providing focused oversight, strategic direction, and operational execution of cybersecurity initiatives across the brokers' organisations.

Given their critical role in operational resilience and incident response preparedness, standards relating to people, processes, and governance, specifically under the Recovery Planning and Incident Management pillars are subject to full compliance within three months of the issuance of the Recommendation Paper.

For pillars that involve system changes or infrastructure upgrades, full compliance is targeted by Dec 31, 2026.

ECRL set to drive Terengganu's GDP

KUALA TERENGGANU: Terengganu's GDP is projected to rise to RM48.2 billion by 2040, up from RM34 billion in 2020, resulting from the implementation of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project.

Mohd Nurkuzaini Ab Rahman, chairman of the State Committee on Digital Economy, New Revenue, Trade, Industry and Green Technology, said data from the ECRL Integrated Land Use Master Plan (PeGTA) study by PlanMalaysia indicates an average annual increase of around 1.8% over the project period.

He said this demonstrates that the federal government's project is expected to have a significant economic growth impact on Terengganu.

"This projection takes into account the direct and indirect effects of ECRL construction and operations, including increased investment in the industrial and logistics sectors; growth in trade and tourism activities; and transit-oriented development around key ECRL stations at Jerleh, Bandar Permaisuri, Kuala Terengganu, Dungun, Kemasik and Chukai," he told the State Legislative Assembly yesterday.

Mohd Nurkuzaini was responding to Dr Mamad Puteh (PAS–Kuala Berang), who had asked about the projected economic impact of the ECRL on Terengganu's GDP once it becomes operational.

Overall, he added, the ECRL project will not only strengthen the regional transport network but also has the potential to act as a major catalyst for the state's economic development, creating new employment opportunities and enhancing Terengganu's competitiveness within the East Coast economic ecosystem.

For the record, ECRL construction projects in Terengganu involve six stations, all of which are passenger stations except for the Dungun and Chukai stations, which also include cargo facilities. – **Bernama**

Petronas deepens global AI, HPC ties

PETALING JAYA: Petronas, through Malaysia Petroleum Management (MPM), signed a series of MoUs at Adipec 2025 in Abu Dhabi, committing to global collaboration and technology driven innovation.

The MoUs bring together global industry including SLB, Beicip-Franlab, ConocoPhillips, Eliis, PTTEP, Microsoft, Shell, and TotalEnergies. The collaborations will focus on advancing seismic imaging and accelerating artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning development enabled by high-performance computing (HPC).

MPM senior vice-president Datuk Bacho Piong said the partnerships like these are essential in advancing Malaysia's upstream landscape.

"By combining the strengths of energy operators and technology innovators, we are not only strengthening our exploration and development capabilities but also setting the foundation for a more efficient and resilient Malaysia upstream sector," he added.

In a statement yesterday, it said by harnessing dynamic modelling and agentic AI, the initiative enables real-time data integration, continuous forecasting, and proactive decision-making. These capabilities extend beyond subsurface evaluation to offshore facility optimisation, particularly through the deployment of Normally Unattended Facilities and Remote Autonomous Operations.

These advancements will also support more efficient technical evaluations and investment decisions. Through these collaborations, MPM continues to strengthen Malaysia's position as a leading destination for high-value upstream investments.

Cape EMS boosts Johor–S'pore clean energy drive

JOHOR BAHRU: Cape EMS Bhd, a Malaysian-based electronic manufacturing services (EMS) solutions provider with a global presence, has been selected as one of the recipients of financing support under Maybank's Johor–Singapore Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) initiative – a national programme designed to catalyse cross-border trade, green technology, and high-value manufacturing in the Southern Corridor.

The facility was formalised via a financing offer letter issued to Cape EMS in conjunction with the launch of Maybank's Forest City Service Centre, aimed at empowering high-growth enterprises and small-to-mid-sized industries within the JS-SEZ corridor.

This facility forms part of Maybank's RM15 billion financing and investment commitment for the JS-SEZ, comprising RM10 billion in direct financing and up to RM5.35 billion in investment

interest from clients over the next decade.

Cape EMS is among five Johor-based organisations receiving a total of approximately RM120 million in collective financing, underscoring Maybank's confidence in the group's capability to anchor regional clean-energy and manufacturing growth.

The financing provides strategic headroom for Cape EMS' next phase of expansion across key growth verticals, including localised assembly and lifecycle management of Battery Energy Storage Systems; deployment of EV-related charging and smart-mobility infrastructure; and scaling of precision EMS operations within its Senai facilities.

In a statement, it said this milestone builds upon Cape EMS's recent progress in forming regional technology partnerships, advancing in-house manufacturing capabilities for clean-energy components, and supporting high-

value industries aligned with Malaysia's energy transition and smart-city agenda.

Cape EMS Bhd commented, "We are honoured to be recognised as a key participant in Maybank's JS-SEZ initiative. This financing underscores institutional confidence in our strategic direction and provides the runway to fast-track next-generation clean-energy and infrastructure solutions. Our focus is clear – to build scalable, bankable systems that advance national and climate goals while creating long-term value for our clients, partners, and stakeholders."

The company said the group's participation in the JS-SEZ programme aligns closely with Malaysia's National Energy Transition Roadmap and the government's objective to strengthen the Johor–Singapore corridor as a catalyst for sustainable industrial growth, clean-technology adoption, and regional investment.

Singles' Day festival winds down with 'muted' sentiment

➤ Major Chinese platforms yet to release detailed sales data

SHANGHAI: China's Singles' Day sales festival is coming to a close after more than a month of promotions on the country's largest e-commerce platforms, which failed to spark widespread consumer excitement during the world's largest shopping event.

Consumer malaise in China, stemming from a prolonged property crisis and concerns about income security, has made it harder than ever to get people to open their wallets.

In response, retailers have become more aggressive about year-round discounting, rolled out billions of yuan in consumer subsidies and coupons and elongated sales events.

Many sites kicked off this year's Singles' Day - which refers to Nov 11, or 11.11 - in the first half of October, making it the longest festival to date.

"It is a mixed bag," said Josh Gardner, CEO of Kung Fu Data, which manages online stores in China for over a dozen global fashion and lifestyle brands.

"Muted might be a good word to describe sentiment and sales this Singles' Day period."

"We have some brands that have done extremely well, far exceeding expectations," he added.

"Others are flat or up or down slightly over last year."

Last year's sales for what was then the longest-ever event - also called "Double 11" in China - totaled 1.44 trillion yuan (RM835 billion), according to Syntun, a data provider.

While major platforms once held galas to herald the record-breaking sales that seemed to just roll in year after year, companies including Alibaba and JD.com have not disclosed total Singles' Day sales for several years.

JD.com said yesterday its



A worker sorts packages at JD's warehouse during the Double 11 festival in Beijing. - AFPIC

turnover had reached a "new high," with the number of users placing orders increasing by 40% and the number of orders increasing by nearly 60%.

On JD.com, sales of Bellamy Organic baby products from Australia, American pet brand Instinct and French skincare from Avène all increased by over 150% from a year earlier, the company said.

Alibaba's Tmall and Taobao platforms are offering Double 11 deals through Nov 14, but the company has yet to release any information on their sales performance through the end of Nov 11.

Earlier, Alibaba said 35 brands, including Nike, L'Oreal and local firms Anta and beauty upstart Proya, sold more than 100 million yuan worth of merchandise in the first hour of the sale this year.

Gardner said the Singles' Day

"sales spike" is not as strong as it used to be, but October and November still account for around 30% to 40% of annual revenue for the brands he manages.

"Up until last year, I would always plan ahead for Double 11, making a list of what to buy, but I didn't do that this year," said Li Yan, a 45-year-old housewife in Beijing.

"It's just so convenient to buy things anytime now, so I spent the shopping festival without buying any big-ticket items."

In an effort to entice big spenders to splash out even more, Alibaba in October pledged 50 billion yuan in subsidies specifically for its 53 million 88VIP members.

Last week, the company said among those members, there was a 39% rise in daily active buyers from a year earlier during the festival.

"From the merchant perspective, targeting 88VIP consumers is

important because those consumers are high-spend and high-frequency ... helping sustain consumption at the upper-end of the market (which) has been resilient," said Jacob Cooke, co-founder and CEO of WPIC Marketing + Technologies.

Alibaba's Taobao rolled out Singles' Day-related sales in over 20 countries this year, part of what has been a near industry-wide push from Chinese e-commerce firms to grow overseas.

In a Singles' Day report released in late October, Bain said Chinese e-commerce companies needed to look for global growth sooner rather than later given the tepid consumer outlook at home.

In London, Alibaba's AliExpress hosted a livestream event featuring Pop Mart toys in an event it expected would sell 10,000 gifts to shoppers following along on the AliExpress app. - Reuters

Data centres to drive energy storage 'boom cycle': UBS

BEIJING: AI data centre-fuelled power demand growth in the US is likely to drive a "boom cycle" for energy storage in the next five years as more storage is needed to smooth out fluctuations from wind and solar generation, according to UBS Securities.

Global energy storage demand could increase 40% globally year-on-year in 2026, Hong Kong-based UBS Securities analyst Yan Yishu told a media briefing yesterday.

"The demand for AI data centres in the US is very robust, but electricity is the biggest bottleneck."

Renewables are the only power-generating segment expected to grow significantly in the next five years in the US, and because they produce power intermittently, the grid needs more batteries to store that power.

The American market is key for Chinese energy storage manufacturers, which have a 20% market share in the US, because it is one of the highest-margin markets.

However, emerging markets in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia could see the fastest growth rates of 30% to 50% or more, Yan said in the briefing.

The biggest risk for Chinese exports to the US is the foreign entity of concern requirements in President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill, which place restrictions on participation in the American energy sector by Chinese-owned or controlled firms, Yan said.

In China, a push to implement market-based pricing for renewables will give a further boost to energy storage projects, which profit by charging up when prices are low and selling power when prices are high.

A peak-valley electricity price difference of 0.4 yuan (RM0.25) per kilowatt-hour is enough to put independent storage projects, or those that are not combined with a renewable power plant, in the money, Yan said.

UBS anticipates Chinese provinces are likely to introduce so-called capacity payments, which compensate battery owners to be available when needed, to further incentivise energy storage. - Reuters

Takaichi 'strongly hopes' BOJ achieves wage-driven inflation

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said she "strongly hopes" the central bank achieves inflation driven by wages rather than primarily through rising food costs, signaling her administration's preference for interest rates to stay low.

Speaking in Parliament yesterday, Takaichi said Japan still faced the risk of returning to deflation, which would prompt households to hold off spending, hurt corporate profits and discourage firms from raising wages.

She also voiced displeasure over recent inflation because it was driven mostly by rising food costs and potentially hurting the economy.

"I'd like to see Japan experience moderate inflation accompanied by wage increases. The type of inflation

we're seeing now is not good," Takaichi said.

The government plans to compile a package of measures to cushion the blow from rising living costs and lift investment in growth areas, which in turn will boost corporate profits and brighten consumer sentiment, she said.

"We will create a strong economy. This is a matter that affects monetary policy in a big way, so we hope to coordinate closely with the Bank of Japan (BOJ)," Takaichi said.

"I strongly hope the BOJ conducts policy appropriately so it sustainably and stably achieves its 2% inflation target not through cost-push factors, but by wage gains."

The remarks by Takaichi, known as

an advocate of expansionary fiscal and monetary policy, reinforce the challenge facing the BOJ.

Even before yesterday's comments, the Takaichi administration's preference for low rates and fiscal largesse had raised complications for the BOJ's decision on how soon to resume interest rate hikes.

While the BOJ kept interest rates steady at 0.5% last month, governor Kazuo Ueda has signaled the central bank's readiness to hike rates as soon as December if it is sufficiently convinced that companies will keep hiking pay next year.

A delay in the next rate hike, which most market players expect to happen in December or January next year, could trigger renewed yen

declines that push up import costs and broader inflation, analysts say.

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama acknowledged that the negative aspects of the weak yen have become more pronounced than the positives factors, adding the currency's weakness was among factors pushing up raw material costs.

"Recently, we have been seeing one-sided and rapid movements in the foreign exchange market," Katayama told the same Parliament session yesterday.

The minister warned that authorities were monitoring developments with a "strong sense of vigilance".

Katayama's remarks briefly pushed down the dollar to around ¥154.55 from ¥154.75.

While a weak yen gives exports a boost, it has become a political headache for policymakers as it pushes up the cost of importing fuel, food and raw materials.

Core consumer inflation hit 2.9% in September, staying above the BOJ's 2% target on stubbornly high food prices and keeping pressure on the bank to push up still-low borrowing costs.

Pessimists in the BOJ, however, fret about the fragile state of Japan's economy.

A Reuters poll showed that analysts expect Japan's economy to have shrunk an annualised 2.5% in the third quarter due partly to the hit from higher American tariffs. - Reuters

GM asks parts makers to exit China supply chains

➤ Automotive companies frustrated over geopolitical disruptions to operations

DETROIT: General Motors has directed several thousand of its suppliers to scrub their supply chains of parts from China, four people familiar with the matter said, reflecting automakers' growing frustration over geopolitical disruptions to their operations.

GM executives have been telling suppliers they should find alternatives to China for their raw materials and parts, with the goal of eventually moving their supply chains out of the country entirely, the people said.

The automaker has set a 2027 deadline for some suppliers to dissolve their China sourcing ties, some of the sources said.

GM approached some suppliers with the directive in late 2024, but the effort took on fresh urgency this past spring, during the early days of an escalating US-China trade battle, the sources said.

GM executives have said it is part of a broader strategy to improve the company's supply chain "resiliency", the sources said.

Geopolitical tensions between the two superpowers have left car executives in triage mode throughout 2025.

US President Donald Trump's on-again, off-again tariffs and bouts of industry panic over potential rare-earth bottlenecks and computer-chip shortages have auto companies rethinking their ties to China, long an important source of parts and raw materials.

Automakers and suppliers have responded to Trump's push for investment and jobs by taking early steps to expand US factory work.

But industry executives say they also sense a longer-term, bipartisan shift in US-China relations, and some are moving to unwind China ties that are decades in the making.

The GM effort targets parts and materials that go into cars built in North America, where

the company makes the majority of its vehicles globally.

GM prefers to obtain parts from North American factories for vehicles built in the region but is open to non-US supply lines outside of China, the sources said.

GM's directive includes several other countries that, like China, are subject to US trade restrictions because of national-security concerns, such as Russia and Venezuela.

China is by far the largest source for automotive parts on the list.

The automaker already had been among the most active car companies in weaning itself from a reliance on China for battery materials and computer chips.

It has partnered with a US-based rare-earths company and invested in a lithium mine in Nevada for future electric-vehicle battery materials, for example.

But the latest effort is broader and includes more basic components and materials.

A GM spokesperson declined to comment on the company's discussions with its supply base. GM CEO Mary Barra has described efforts to move more of the company's supply chain to the US.

"We've been working now for a few years to have supply chain resiliency," Barra said during GM's quarterly conference call in October, adding that the automaker tries to source parts in the same country where it builds the cars, when possible.

Shilpan Amin, GM's global purchasing chief, said at a conference last month that the risk of supply disruptions has forced the automaker to move away from simply tapping the lowest-cost countries.

"Resiliency is important - making sure you have more control over your supply chain and you know exactly what is coming where," he said.

The US and China agreed to roll back a number of tariffs and export barriers following a meeting in late October between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Still, auto executives have grown tired of the volatile trade dynamics between the countries and the fallout on their supply

chains, in an industry where product-planning cycles stretch many years.

Parts suppliers and carmakers already had been tilting their supply chains away from China to avoid tariffs put on during Trump's first term.

This year, a barrage of China tariffs unleashed soon after Trump took office triggered a series of counterpunches from China.

In April, China clamped down on exports of parts that contain rare-earth elements that are used extensively inside cars, sending auto companies racing to stockpile components.

In October, China added restrictions on shipments of more rare-earth elements.

Worries over potential factory disruptions flared again late last month, when an intellectual-property dispute between Chinese and Dutch authorities led China to halt shipments from supplier Nexperia, which sells cheap computer chips that go into electronics in cars worldwide.

The move prompted industry warnings of widespread factory interruptions.

For parts suppliers, re-routing supply chains outside of China can be costly and complex.

China has become so dominant in some areas of the automotive supply chain - such as lighting, electronics and tool and die makers, which forge custom components - that it is hard to find alternatives, supplier executives say.

"It's a big effort. Suppliers are scrambling," an executive at one large parts maker said of GM's initiative.

Collin Shaw, head of MEMA, the Vehicle Suppliers Association, said car companies and big suppliers have been working to "de-risk" their supply chains by cutting back on content from China and some other countries.

But the network of commodity parts and raw materials inside China is deeply rooted, complicating efforts to find alternatives.

"In some cases this has been 20 or 30 years in the making, and we're trying to undo it in a few years," he said.

"It's not going to happen that fast." - Reuters

Humans can no longer tell AI music from the real thing: Survey

PARIS: It has become nearly impossible for people to tell the difference between music generated by artificial intelligence and that created by humans, according to a survey released yesterday.

The polling firm Ipsos asked 9,000 people to listen to two clips of AI-generated music and one of human-made music in a survey conducted for France-based streaming platform Deezer.

"Ninety-seven per cent could not distinguish between music entirely generated by AI and human-created music," said Deezer in a statement.

The survey was conducted between Oct 6 and 10 in eight countries: Brazil, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and the United States.

Deezer said more than half of the respondents felt uncomfortable at not being able to tell the difference.

Pollsters also asked broader questions about the impact of AI, with 51% saying the technology would lead to more low-quality music on streaming platforms and almost two-thirds believing it will lead to a loss of creativity.

"The survey results clearly show that people care about music and want to know if they're listening to AI or human made tracks or not," Deezer CEO Alexis Lanternier said in a statement.

Deezer said there has not only been a surge in AI-generated content being uploaded to its platform, but it is finding listeners as well.

In January, one in 10 of the tracks streamed each day were completely AI-generated.

Ten months later, that percentage has climbed to over one in three, or nearly 40,000 per day.

Eighty per cent of survey respondents wanted fully AI-generated music clearly labelled for listeners.

Deezer is the only major music-streaming platform that systematically labels completely AI-generated content for users.

The issue gained prominence in June when a band called The Velvet Sundown suddenly went viral on Spotify, and only confirmed the following month that it was in fact AI-generated content.

The AI group's most popular song has been streamed more than three million times.

In response, Spotify said it would encourage artists and publishers to sign up to a voluntary industry code to disclose AI use in music production. - AFP

Google unveils €5.5 billion investment in Germany

BERLIN: Google unveiled its biggest-ever investment in Germany on Tuesday, pledging €5.5 billion (RM26 billion) for a new data centre and other projects, as Europe seeks to catch up in the AI race.

It comes after AI chip juggernaut Nvidia and Deutsche Telekom last week announced plans for a high-tech hub in Germany aimed at helping industry speed up adoption of artificial intelligence.

The cash injections are a boost for Germany, whose economy is struggling, as well as Europe as it seeks to catch up with AI leaders the United States and China.

"We are driving growth in Germany," Chancellor Friedrich Merz said as Google announced the investments, which are to be made by 2029.

"Our country is and will remain one of the most attractive places for investment in the world," he said.

Google's plans include a new data centre and expansion of an existing centre in the western state of Hesse, providing computing power for artificial intelligence.

It also plans to expand its offices in Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich, and outlined various projects aimed at reducing its greenhouse gas emissions.

These included buying renewable wind and solar energy and a "heat recovery project" that would see excess heat produced by a data centre



(from left) Google Cloud Northern Europe vice-president Marianne Janik, Justus and German Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil attend a press conference in Berlin. - REUTERS/SPIC

re-used by local residents.

The plans will support around 9,000 jobs a year in Germany, Google said.

"Google is deepening its roots in Germany, extending our investments in the country and creating new avenues for AI-driven transformation," said Philipp Justus, Google's country manager for Germany.

Merz's coalition, which took power this year, is seeking to attract more foreign investment to boost the digital sector with prospects for the

country's traditional industrial titans increasingly bleak.

The recently unveiled Nvidia project involves a one-billion-euro investment for a computing hub in the southern city of Munich designed to enable European companies, from big industry players to start-ups, better access to AI.

Germany is quickly building up its data centres - by 2030, the country's data centre computing power will increase by 70%, according to digital business association Bitkom.

Europe still lags far behind, however - as of last year the continent's data centres had computing capacity of 16 gigawatts, compared with 48 in the US and 38 in China, according to the group.

While the investments will be broadly welcomed in Germany as Merz seeks to reboot the economy, some are nevertheless concerned about the reliance on US tech giants in sensitive areas such as AI.

Increasingly uneasy ties between Europe and the US since President Donald Trump returned to power have fuelled calls for more "digital sovereignty" - meaning the region's data should be stored at home, where European rules and norms apply, rather than handed to US firms.

Google made a nod to these concerns on Tuesday, emphasising in its announcement that it offered "sovereign" cloud computing that allowed customers to adopt "AI capabilities, while adhering to local requirements and European values".

Kristina Sinemus, a senior official responsible for digital affairs in Hesse, also played down concerns that working with US tech giants could threaten data security.

"We don't automatically hand over all the data to the US with a US investor," she said, stressing that agreements could ensure data was kept at home.

"We need to stop thinking in black and white terms, because it's a bit more complex than that." - AFP



O&G demand could rise until 2050

➤ IEA warns global shift to clean energy is lagging as oil and gas use stays strong

LONDON: Global oil and gas (O&G) demand could grow until 2050, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said yesterday, departing from its previous expectations of a speedy transition to cleaner fuels and predicting that the world will likely fail to achieve climate goals.

The IEA, the West's energy security watchdog, has been under pressure from the US for a shift in recent years toward a focus on clean energy policies as President Donald Trump called on American companies to further expand oil and gas production.

Under the Joe Biden administration, the IEA predicted that global oil demand would peak this decade and said no more investment in oil and gas was needed if the world wanted to achieve its climate target.

Trump's Energy Secretary Chris Wright has called the IEA's demand peak projections "nonsensical". The IEA is funded by member countries, with the US being the largest contributor. Its analysis and data underpin energy policies of governments and companies around the world.

In its annual World Energy

Outlook published yesterday, the IEA predicted under a current policies scenario that oil demand will hit 113 million barrels per day by mid-century, up around 13% from 2024 consumption.

It predicted that global energy demand will climb by 90 exajoules by 2035 – a 15% increase from present levels.

The current policies scenario takes into account existing government policies and not aspirations to achieve climate goals.

The IEA last used the "current policies scenario" for its predictions in 2019 and switched to predictions more in line with a clean energy transition and pledges of reaching net zero emissions by mid-century from 2020.

This year's outlook ditched the pledges scenario.

The IEA said it had planned to assess new country climate targets covering 2031-2035 but not enough countries had submitted these plans to produce a meaningful picture.

In the IEA's stated policies scenario, which considers policies that have been put forward but not necessarily adopted, oil demand peaks around 2030.

The IEA says its scenarios explore a range of possible outcomes under various sets of assumptions and are not forecasts.

Final investment decisions for new liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects have surged in 2025, the report noted. Operations for about 300 billion cubic metres (bcm) of new annual LNG export capacity will start by 2030, marking a 50% increase in available supply.

Under the current policies scenario, the global LNG market increases from around 560 bcm in 2024 to 880 bcm in 2035 and to 1,020 bcm in 2050, driven by rising power sector demand fuelled by data centre and AI growth.

Global investment in data centres is expected to reach US\$580 billion (RM2.4 trillion) in 2025, the report said, noting that if achieved this would surpass the US\$540 billion a year spent globally on oil supply.

The report also includes a net zero scenario describing a pathway to reduce global energy emissions to net zero by 2050.

More than 190 countries pledged at the Paris climate talks in 2015 to try to keep the world from warming more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

But the report shows the world surpassing 1.5 C of warming in all scenarios, only declining again under the net zero scenario if technology to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is deployed. – Reuters



Surging AI and data-centre energy demand drive renewed growth in oil and gas consumption, the IEA reports. – UNSPLASH PIX

SoftBank shares fall on Nvidia stake sale

TOKYO: SoftBank's shares slid as much as 10% yesterday after the US\$5.8 billion (RM24 billion) sale of its stake in Nvidia highlighted the growing funding demands it faces to bankroll its "all-in" bet on ChatGPT creator OpenAI and other investments.

The conglomerate needs to fund a US\$22.5 billion follow-on investment in OpenAI, is acquiring chipmaker Ampere in a US\$6.5 billion deal and has agreed to buy the robotics business of Swiss group ABB for US\$5.4 billion.

Analyst Mary Pollock at CreditSights estimates SoftBank has committed to at least US\$41 billion in recent spending on investments and purchases. Its cash position totalled ¥4.2 trillion (RM115 billion) at the end of September.

SoftBank's cash needs in the current quarter are "substantial", Pollock wrote in a note.

"Though SBG's liquidity position has improved relative to when it issued its hybrids in October, we still estimate it will need to be proactive funding its recent (more than) US\$41 billion investment spend," she wrote.

The share drop also comes amid investor concerns about the risk that rapidly rising tech valuations are overextended, even as SoftBank moves to deepen its exposure to the AI sector.

SoftBank said on Tuesday it sold the Nvidia stake and also sold T-Mobile US shares for US\$9.2 billion between June and September.

SoftBank's founder and CEO Masayoshi Son, who is known for his

risk appetite and aggressive investing style, is bullish on the outlook for artificial intelligence (AI).

"I do not think SoftBank has a negative view on Nvidia," said Rolf Bulk, analyst at New Street Research.

"The position was large, liquid, and easy to monetise, and likely SoftBank sees even more upside in reallocating capital to OpenAI."

In June, Son said corporate winners grow stronger over time, scooping up profits, and made a comparison with firms such as Alphabet's Google and Amazon.

SoftBank's shares have had a blistering run, more than quadrupling between April and October, but have pared gains in recent days.

On Wednesday, the shares

recouped some of their earlier losses and ended the day down 3.46%. Shares in Nvidia and chip designer Arm, which is controlled by SoftBank, fell 3% overnight.

In addition to selling shares, SoftBank has issued bonds and taken out loans to support its investments.

SoftBank took out a US\$8.5 billion loan for its OpenAI backing and arranged a US\$6.5 billion bridging loan for its acquisition of Ampere, which it has not yet drawn.

Since the start of April, SoftBank has also issued bonds in three currencies worth ¥620 billion, US\$2.2 billion and €1.7 billion (RM8.2 billion), respectively.

SoftBank's loan-to-value ratio, a measure of indebtedness, was 16.5% at

the end of September, down from 17% in the previous quarter. However, SoftBank CFO Yoshimitsu Goto said at an earnings briefing on Tuesday that the end of September level was "actually a bit too safe".

Despite the increasing overvaluation concerns, Navneet Govil, CFO at SoftBank's Vision Fund investing arm, emphasised that growing demand for AI services validates their investment thesis.

"What's different between the dotcom boom and today is that AI companies are generating meaningful revenues," Govil told Reuters after its earnings release on Tuesday.

"There's a lot of talk about capex spend, but it's actually driven by demand," he said. – Reuters

Yen stablecoin issuer eyes Japan bond market

TOKYO: Stablecoin issuers could become major buyers of Japanese government bonds in several years and influence the central bank's control over monetary policy, the head of Japan's first domestic issuer of yen-pegged stablecoins told Reuters.

Japanese startup JPYC began issuing stablecoins pegged to the yen – also called JPYC – on Oct 27 in a significant move in a country where many consumers still prefer traditional payment methods such as cash and credit cards.

The company has rolled out about ¥143 million (RM3.8 million) worth of JPYC so far with the number of account holders hitting 4,707 as of Nov 12. It has said it aims to issue ¥10 trillion worth of

JPYC over three years.

While still a drop in the ocean of a US\$290-billion-dollar (RM1.2 trillion) stablecoin market, JPYC will help the yen hold a presence in a rapidly growing digital market where stablecoins pegged to the US dollar make up 99% of global supply, the company's CEO Noritaka Okabe said in an interview on Tuesday.

"Various assets are now traded on blockchains real-time across the world. But the stablecoin market is dominated by the dollar, which is a disadvantage to Japanese firms that need to pay extra hedging and transaction costs," he said on Tuesday.

"Japan must ensure the yen has a presence in the global stablecoin

market," Okabe said.

Blockchain-based stablecoins are typically pegged to a fiat currency and offer faster and cheaper transactions.

JPYC is fully convertible to the yen and backed by domestic savings and Japanese government bonds (JGB). The firm plans to invest 80% of its proceeds in JGBs and 20% in bank savings.

Given the rapid growth of stablecoins, issuers of the assets could become major buyers of bonds and in Japan help fill a hole left by the diminishing presence of the BOJ, Okabe said.

"With the BOJ tapering bond buying, stablecoin issuers could emerge as the biggest holders of JGBs in the next few years," he said.

The increasing presence of such issuers could constrain the BOJ's monetary policy, as the volumes of JGBs they buy are swayed by the balance of supply and demand for stablecoins, he said.

"While authorities could try to control the duration of bonds stablecoin issuers buy, it would be hard for them to control the volume they hold," he said. "This will happen around the world. Japan is no exception."

The BOJ still holds roughly 50% of the ¥1,055-trillion JGB market, but began slowing bond purchases since last year as part of its efforts to phase out a decade-long, huge stimulus.

There is uncertainty on whether domestic financial institutions, which

cut holdings during prolonged ultra-loose policy, will replace the BOJ as dominant JGB buyers with the new administration seen issuing more debt to fund spending plans.

While JPYC plans to mostly buy short-term securities, Okabe said, he has been approached by lawmakers and government officials on whether it could buy more longer-duration JGBs.

"It's something we could look into in the future," he said.

Stablecoins pegged to the dollar have surged with strong backing from US President Donald Trump. Japan's three largest banks have announced a plan, backed by the country's financial regulator, to experiment jointly issuing stablecoins. – Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: NOV 12

12-Nov-2025

Bursa Malaysia

Trade Statistics

Net (in RM million):

Participation

Retail **-47.98** **15.05%**Institutions **-145.90** **49.95%**Foreign **+193.88** **35.00%**

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Berjaya Research
Preliminary statistics (excluding trade amendments). For final data, please refer to
www.bursamalaysia.com.

Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn. Bhd. is now rebranded as Berjaya Securities Sdn. Bhd.



Berjaya Securities (formerly known as Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn Bhd)

- Quick updates on market news, statistics & information
- Monthly Traders' Talk for directions & positioning
- Company coverage & trading insights
- One-to-One trading coaching (available upon request)



QR Code to register for i-to-i Coaching

SUNBIZ presents a summary of the day's trading activity on Bursa Malaysia and other markets in an easy to digest format.

Sources: Bursa Malaysia, Bernama, shareinvestor.com and websites

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Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE	
FBMEMAS	12,105.70	-8.58
FBMKLCI	1,631.61	-3.22
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	539.62	+0.33
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	167.73	-0.55
CONSTRUCTION	310.65	+2.07
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,427.80	-16.03
ENERGY	758.09	-1.25
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	498.46	+0.48
HEALTH CARE	1,594.60	-7.59
TRANSPORTATION	1,018.40	-3.12
PROPERTY	1,020.88	+0.02
PLANTATION	8,173.48	-2.92
FBMSHA	12,122.70	-10.10
FBMACE	5,064.67	-11.05
TECHNOLOGY	62.00	-0.42

TURNOVER: 3.429 bil **VALUE: RM2.856 bil**

Bursa lower on mixed sentiment ahead of key data releases

BURSA Malaysia snapped its three-day winning streak to close marginally lower yesterday as selling pressure emerged in selected heavyweight counters, particularly in financial services and telecommunications sectors.

IPPFA Sdn Bhd director of investment strategy and country economist Mohd Sedek Jantan said that the broader market sentiment was mixed, suggesting investors remained selective ahead of key local and global data releases.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI fell 3.22 points, or 0.19%, to 1,631.61 from Tuesday's close of 1,634.83.

The barometer index opened 1.91 points firmer at 1,636.74, and fluctuated between 1,630.12 and 1,641.27 throughout the trading session.

The broader market was negative, with 650 losers outnumbering 463 gainers, while 557 counters were unchanged, 1,049 untraded, and 10 suspended.

Mohd Sedek noted that the local market's pullback reflected short-term profit-taking rather than structural weakness, as investors shifted focus to value-oriented stocks.

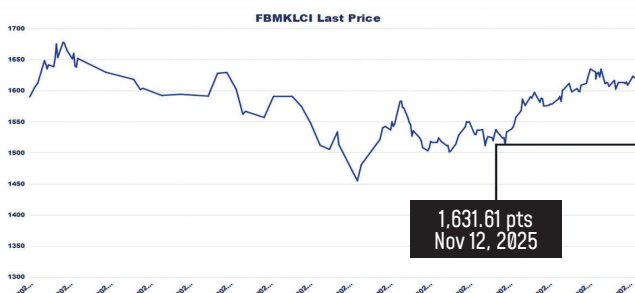
Among heavyweights, Maybank rose three sen to RM9.94 and Tenaga Nasional added two sen to RM13.40. Public Bank fell three sen to RM4.27, while both CIMB and IHH Healthcare lost six sen to RM7.59 and RM8.24, respectively.

On the most active list, MMAG declined 1.5 sen to 7.5 sen, Bumi Armada and Dagang NeXchange shed one sen each to 30 sen, respectively, ACE debutant Farmiera gained half-a-sen to 25.5 sen, while Perak Transit was flat at 27.5 sen.

Among the top gainers, Nestle increased 90 sen to RM112.90, Fraser & Neave went up 84 sen to RM31.04, United Plantations rose 44 sen to RM26.24, and Dutch Lady rose 32 sen to RM27.28. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWKJ	0.205	+0.020	+10.81	2,521,751
HSI-PWL4	0.135	-0.015	-10.00	2,339,410
MMAG	0.075	-0.015	-16.67	1,794,362
HSI-CWKT	0.075	-0.005	-6.25	1,101,693
HSI-PWLG	0.160	-0.040	-20.00	778,596
TANCO	0.940	+0.010	+1.08	620,047
HSI-PWLH	0.090	-0.010	-10.00	582,649
FAMIERA	0.255	+0.005	+2.00	564,677
ARMADA	0.300	-0.010	-3.23	493,672
PTRANS	0.275	-	-	457,670
HSI-CWKO	0.565	+0.035	+6.60	408,944
TWL	0.025	-	-	355,993
DNEX	0.300	-0.010	-3.23	299,636
PMETAL	6.380	-	-	283,511
IOICORP	4.100	-	-	278,649
GENM	2.350	+0.010	+0.43	270,229
THMY	0.855	-0.025	-2.84	267,248
99SMART	3.140	+0.010	+0.32	255,026
IAB	1.030	+0.105	+11.35	245,193
OCR	0.040	-	-	239,745



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	112.900	+0.900	1,935
F&N	31.040	+0.840	8,958
UTDPLT	26.240	+0.440	2,977
DLADY	27.280	+0.320	307
PJBUMI	1.770	+0.190	14,670
HEIM	22.100	+0.160	1,095
WPRTS	5.450	+0.150	34,045
PARAGON	3.120	+0.130	14,198
IAB	1.030	+0.105	245,193
EUROSP	3.000	+0.100	446
SEB	0.680	+0.100	450
SP500-C58	0.670	+0.100	20
HSI-CWI4	0.925	+0.090	500
IJM	2.500	+0.090	108,196
LYSAGHT	2.450	+0.090	25
MAXIS-C57	0.225	+0.090	275
UMSINT	4.610	+0.090	3,364
FCW	2.180	+0.080	163
RHBBANK	6.890	+0.080	107,512
VSTECs	4.220	+0.080	3,789

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
ENRA-WA	0.010	+100.00	2
GCB-C25	0.010	+100.00	4,500
INGENIEU-WB	0.010	+100.00	10
GCB-C30	0.035	+75.00	13,600
MAXIS-C57	0.225	+66.67	275
AEON-C41	0.030	+50.00	9,401
AHB-WC	0.015	+50.00	581
NEXGBINA-WC	0.015	+50.00	5,750
EVD-WB	0.060	+50.00	900
GCB-C26	0.015	+50.00	1,078
GCB-C28	0.015	+50.00	500
GCB-C29	0.045	+50.00	20,000
HIBISCS-C78	0.015	+50.00	7,962
HIBISCS-C85	0.030	+50.00	1,000
HSI-CWI6	0.045	+50.00	750
XDL	0.015	+50.00	35
AXIATA-CIT	0.120	+41.18	6,000
HEXRTL-WA	0.070	+40.00	3,359
GCB-C32	0.075	+36.36	6,140
D&O-C21	0.135	+35.00	8,451

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	47,927.96	559.33	1.18
S&P 500 [US]	6,846.61	14.18	0.21
NASDAQ [US]	23,468.30	-58.87	-0.25
NYSE [US]	21,716.73	150.32	0.7
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,778.98	53.28	0.93
FTSE 100 [UK]	9,906.34	6.74	0.07
DAX [GER]	24,356.00	267.94	1.11
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	51,063.31	220.38	0.43
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	3,359.33	37.75	1.14
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	26,922.73	226.32	0.85
CSI 300 [CHN]	4,645.91	-6.26	-0.13
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	227.74	0.06	0.03
SHANGHAI SE COM [CHN]	4,000.14	-2.62	-0.07
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	4,150.39	44	1.07
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	84,489.32	618	0.74
ASX 200 [AUS]	8,799.53	-19.26	-0.22
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	9,079.36	-19.05	-0.21
FBM KLCI	1,631.61	-3.22	-0.2
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	4,560.95	18.75	0.41
WTI [US\$/BBL.]	60.6	-0.44	-0.72
BRENT [US\$/BBL.]	64.75	-0.41	-0.64
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	4,139.00	22.7	0.55
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	51.68	0.93	1.83
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	1,595.27	10.12	0.63
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	506.75	0.15	0.03
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	10,827.00	31	0.29
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	432.25	0.25	0.06
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	549.5	-2.25	-0.41
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	51.56	0.16	0.31
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	5,929.00	-272	-4.39
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	170.9	1.2	0.71

As at 6pm, Nov 12.

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
MPI	31.000	-0.400	2,195
PETDAG	22.660	-0.260	2,791
HLIND	14.860	-0.220	1,805
EKOVEST-C78	0.015	-0.135	16,918
QL	4.250	-0.130	15,627
AXIATA-C1V	0.105	-0.125	500
APOLLO	6.270	-0.100	45
HSI-PWL9	1.250	-0.100	627
HSI-PWLN	0.280	-0.100	660
MCEMENT	6.530	-0.100	4,555
PENTA	3.880	-0.100	21,982
SLVEST	3.090	-0.100	16,390
AMWAY	4.810	-0.090	1,176
ECOSHOP-CW	0.060	-0.090	1,060
JCY-C22	0.060	-0.090	60
PANAMY	7.890	-0.090	978
EG-CJ	0.065	-0.085	6,000
INARI-C4B	0.065	-0.085	1,000
LPI	14.520	-0.080	158
UWC	4.000	-0.080	12,830

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
EKOVEST-C78	0.015	-90.00	16,918
YTLPOWR-C97	0.005	-66.67	4,220
ECOSHOP-CW	0.060	-60.00	1,060
JCY-C22	0.060	-60.00	60
HSI-PWJW	0.035	-58.82	500
EG-CJ	0.065	-56.67	6,000
INARI-C4B	0.065	-56.67	1,000
AXIATA-C1V	0.105	-54.35	500
HSI-PWLP	0.030	-53.85	500
DIALOG-C2C	0.045	-52.63	1,020
ARTRONIQ-WA	0.005	-50.00	2
BCMALL	0.005	-50.00	3,279
CYPARK-CJ	0.005	-50.00	1,000
GREATEC-C15	0.005	-50.00	14,638
HANDAL-WB	0.005	-50.00	447
HSI-CWI3	0.005	-50.00	100
HSI-PWJ8	0.005	-50.00	1,000
SPSETIA-C98	0.005	-50.00	9,071
SUNCON-C52	0.075	-50.00	1,000
XIAOMI-C40	0.075	-50.00	250

MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

SUNBIZ presents extracts of a selection of commentaries and research reports received from stockbrokers on counters that could be of interest to investors.

Compiled by **SunBiz Team**

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Mida: Central region thrives on infrastructure, partnerships

KUALA LUMPUR: The central region's industrial strength lies not only in its physical infrastructure but also in the close collaboration among governments, investors and industry players, according to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida).

Its CEO Datuk Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim Sikh Abdul Majid said the region, which covers Selangor, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, stands out for its coordinated efforts to drive sustainable industrial growth.

"The central region's advantage lies not only in its physical assets such as ports, transport networks and industrial parks, but also in the quality of coordination and partnerships that underpin its development," he said in his keynote address at the Flagship Investment Seminar on the Central Region Industrial Cluster Initiative.

The two-day investment seminar, which began on Tuesday, brings together about 800 industry leaders, policymakers, business communities, and investors to strengthen the central region as one of Malaysia's hubs for sustainable growth, innovation, and smart industries.

He said the second day of the seminar emphasises ecosystem certainty, calling for alignment of infrastructure, regulatory policies, talent, and supply chain capabilities.

"This requires coordinated execution across universities, state agencies and industries, something we are continuously strengthening together," he said.

He added that Mida's role is to ensure every sector remains well-connected by facilitating engagement between foreign and local suppliers, industrial parks, logistics networks and manufacturers. – Bernama

Ringgit rises for 7th straight day against US dollar

THE ringgit closed marginally higher against the US dollar yesterday, extending its rally for the seventh consecutive trading day, as investors remained positive ahead of the US government reopening vote.

At 6pm, the ringgit appreciated to 4.1315/1385 versus the greenback from Tuesday's close of 4.1360/1395.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the US House of Representatives would vote tonight on the reopening of the US government.

"If approved, the bill will be signed by the US President, which will pave the way for the resumption of government services," he told Bernama.

He said traders and investors remained constructive on the ringgit, with Malaysia's GDP for the third quarter (Q3) of 2025, which will be announced this Friday, likely to expand by more than 5%.

At the close, the ringgit traded higher against a basket of major currencies.

It firmed versus the yen to 2.6681/6728 from 2.6798/6822 at Tuesday's close, climbed against the euro to 4.7801/7882 from 4.7829/7869 yesterday, and rose vis-a-vis the British pound to 5.4189/4281 from 5.4297/4343 previously.

The ringgit also performed better against Asean currencies.

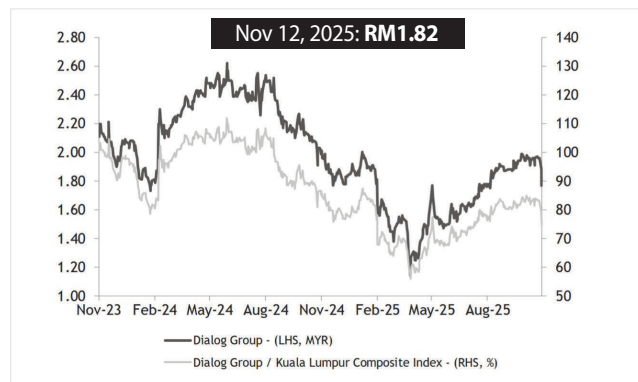
It strengthened versus the Singapore dollar to 3.1683/1742 from 3.1752/1784 on Tuesday, went up against the Indonesian rupiah to 247.1/247.7 from the previous close of 247.7/248.0, gained vis-a-vis the Philippine peso to 6.98/6.99 from 7.01/7.02 previously, and increased against the Thai baht to 12.7068/7346 from 12.7595/7762.

Exchange Rates			
FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.1945	4.0495	4.0395
1 Australian Dollar	2.7460	2.6350	2.6190
1 Brunei Dollar	3.2150	3.1160	3.1080
1 Canadian Dollar	2.9850	2.9020	2.8900
1 Euro	4.8510	4.6950	4.6750
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.3770	2.2890	2.2730
1 Singapore Dollar	3.2150	3.1160	3.1080
1 Sterling Pound	5.5070	5.3310	5.3110
1 Swiss Franc	5.2610	5.0370	5.0220
100 UAE Dirham	115.2500	109.2900	109.0900
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.4980	3.2580	3.0580
100 Chinese Renminbi	59.1700	56.6800	56.6800
100 Danish Krone	66.6000	61.2900	61.0900
100 Hongkong Dollar	54.4200	51.7200	51.5200
100 Indian Rupee	4.8000	4.5100	4.3100
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0259	0.0235	0.0185
100 Japanese Yen	2.7210	2.6230	2.6130
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.5000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	42.7000	39.2800	39.0800
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5100	1.4000	1.2000
100 Philippine Peso	7.2000	6.7800	6.5800
100 Qatar Riyal	116.0700	110.1900	109.9900
100 Saudi Riyal	112.8000	107.0900	106.8900
100 South Africa Rand	25.2600	22.8200	22.6200
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.4100	1.3000	1.1000
100 Swedish Krona	45.6100	41.5500	41.3500
100 Thai Baht	13.4700	11.9500	11.5500

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Dialog Group Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM2.32



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

WE believe Dialog may potentially bag new tank terminal jobs over the next 12 months which could offset concerns from recent news reports on PEC's setback.

To recap, Pengerang Energy Complex (PEC) is a US\$5.3 billion project, envisioned to produce 2.5 million tonnes of aromatics, 3.9 million tonnes of petroleum and 50k tonnes of hydrogen annually. However, The Edge Weekly (in its Nov 8-9, 2025 edition) reported that ChemOne, which is the owner & operator of PEC, is experiencing a setback in achieving financial close, potentially due to cost escalation on the part of its construction partner. The report mentioned an "upward revision" of the EPC costs from the initial US\$2.5 billion by its EPC partner, Maire SpA. As such, ChemOne is understood to be exploring other EPC contractors, including parties from China, according to the report.

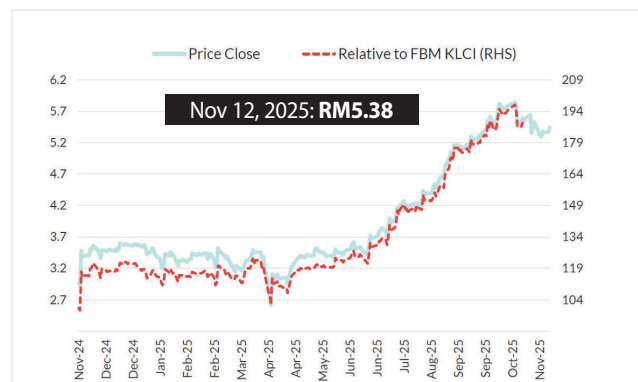
Despite the potential delay in the PEC project, we are not too concerned with Dialog's growth prospects. Our channel checks have indicated that the company is also in talks at the intermediate/ finalisation stage with other oil companies/multinational corporations for LT, dedicated tank terminal contracts. We believe there may be potentially 1-2 more tank terminal jobs for Dialog over the next 12 months.

We have updated Dialog's ESG score and have assigned an above average score of 55 (out of 100), against a previous score of 54. The increase is attributed to: i) improvement in Scope 1 emissions; ii) increase in share of renewable energy used; iii) decline in total water consumption & intensity. However, it was partially mitigated by: i) increase in total waste generated; and ii) a slight increase in LTIF rate.

Buy with RM2.32 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Nov 12**

Kelington Group Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM6.10



Source: Bloomberg

KGB is scheduled to announce its 9M'25 results on Nov 24 followed by an investors call the following day. We expect earnings to trend in line, with Q3'25 core PATAMI at RM35-40 million, up 9-23% QoQ/YoY. The emphasis on profitability should see a further uptick in NPM (Q2'25: 11.7%) with seasonally stronger revenue. The advanced engineering services segment (1H: 70% of revenue) should remain the key growth driver with stronger contributions from Singapore and Malaysia offsetting weaker revenue from China. We see the industrial gas business supported by steady LCO2 demand albeit weaker YoY from lower specialty gas sales and softer project revenue.

We learnt from a recent meeting with management that the tender for the second German fab (JV with Taiwan's largest foundry) will be downsized, with some portion of the job farmed by its principal to another contractor. The lower tender value (RM300-400 million) should nonetheless be offset by the potential expansion in the tenderbook for India (upside to RM1.4 billion value) with the adoption of "offset manufacturing" – a process whereby a wider scope of services is outsourced to contractors. Management expects the outcome of certain tenders to be delayed to Q1/1H'26. The strong outstanding orderbook of the group of over RM1 billion (as at end-September) should keep the group busy well into FY27F. YTD order wins are estimated at more than RM1.1 billion.

Following the MoU signed on Sept 10, KGB is expected to ink the formal JV agreement with Worldwide Energy for the production of green H2O by end-November. KGB will construct a 2MW production hub, utilising the latter's small hydro power plant at Batang Kali.

Buy with RM6.10 TP. – **RHB Research, Nov 12**

Hartalega Holdings Bhd

Hold. Target price: RM1.27



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

HART'S Q2'26 and 1H'26 core net profit missed ours/consensus expectations due to lower-than-expected sales volume and a stronger-than-expected MYR against the USD. HART remains cautious amid rising competition from China glove makers expanding into SEA and it continues to prioritise cost and production efficiency to stay competitive.

Excluding a RM0.5 million unrealised forex gain, RM0.2 million fair value loss, and RM3.8 million one-off gains, Q2'26 core net profit was RM14.2 million (-54% YoY, +42% QoQ), bringing 1H'26 core net profit to RM24.1 million (-62% YoY), at 33% of our/consensus FY26. The YoY decline in 1H'26 earnings was due to delayed restocking activities following front-loaded purchases in Dec 2024 (resulting in slower orders in 1H'25) and uncertainty stemming from US tariff hikes, which led to a "wait-and-see" approach by buyers.

i) Front-loaded inventory has normalised and buyers have returned to the usual 3-6-month cycle, with HART expecting volume improvement ahead,

ii) the priority is to ramp up Plant 9; Plants 3 & 4 remain hibernated and the commissioning of seven new lines at Plant 9 will follow demand. Current running capacity is ~26-27b pcs with utilisation rate (UR) ≥90% (vs 68% [on total capacity] in Q2'26),

iii) selling prices will adjust to forex movements, though full pass-through remains difficult in an oversupplied market. We adjust our FY26/27/28E earnings by -30%/-27%/+15% to factor in: (i) lower UR assumptions of 70%/68% for FY26/27 (from 73%/70%) in anticipation of stiffer competition from China counterparts, and (ii) a change in forex assumption to RM4.25/USD (from RM4.35), cushioned by (iii) a lower workforce (FY26: -24%; FY27: -15%; FY28: -18%).

Hold with RM1.27 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Nov 12**



Hygge your home

Discover Danish, Norwegian art of comfort – P22



WEEKLY FOCUS

MONDAY

Technology and social media

TUESDAY

Family and parenting

WEDNESDAY

Fashion and beauty

THURSDAY

Home and living

FRIDAY

Travel and leisure

SATURDAY

Food and beverage

INSIDE

p23

Web series educates people on property scams

p24

Redefining digital safety in home appliances

p26

Kendrick Lamar bags nine Grammy nominations



Embrace hygge at home

➤ Slow down, truly enjoy your humble abode

As the year draws to a close, there is no better time to slow down, reset and rediscover comfort within your own space. Channel the spirit of hygge, the Danish and Norwegian art of creating warmth, cosiness and contentment and transform your home into an oasis that soothes the senses.

Sleep well, wake refreshed

True hygge extends to the moments of rest. In your bedroom, layer soft cotton linens, woollen throws and textured cushions to create a cocoon of warmth and comfort. Add ambient lighting from lamps or candles to cast a gentle, soothing glow. For a touch of

subtle beauty and cosy charm, try soft cream hues and delicate veining that bring gentle warmth, complementing a serene, restful sanctuary. Together, these elements transform your bedroom into a comforting retreat where you can unwind, reflect and drift into restorative sleep.

Soak, relax and recharge

A warm bath at the end of the day is pure hygge: slow, soothing and comforting. Transform your bathroom into an inviting haven. Soft, natural tones and stone-like textures bring instant warmth and tranquility. Add glowing candlelight, plush towels and a touch of greenery to create a space that wraps you in quiet comfort, helping you truly recharge and melt away the day's stresses.

Cook, share, cosy up

The kitchen is the heart of any hygge home, where warmth is felt in every gesture and shared in every meal.



Kitchen space featuring Cosentino's Dekton Sabbia and Dekton Grafite from Pietra Edition collection.

Whether baking festive treats or enjoying a comforting mug of cocoa, create a welcoming space. Soft, natural tones and stone-like textures add inviting warmth and ensures your kitchen remains beautiful through everyday moments. Layer in wooden accents, warm lighting and cosy textiles to craft a space where laughter lingers, conversation flows, and every meal is infused with love and comfort.

Lounge, relax, embrace togetherness

The living room is where connection thrives, where stories are shared, gifts are exchanged and memories are made. Introduce texture and warmth with cushions, plush rugs and soft, diffused lighting. With gentle lighting and thoughtful details, your living space becomes a cocoon of comfort, conversation and cherished moments with family and friends.

A new year, a hygge home

Start designing your year-end and refresh your space just in time to welcome 2026. Let hygge inspire not only your holiday season but the years ahead, bringing a renewed sense of mind, body and soul.



Living room space featuring Dekton Marmorio from the Pietra Kode collection.



Bathroom featuring Dekton Grigio from the Pietra Kode collection.

SOUND CHECK



Samsung Sound Tower 2025 – MX-ST50F and MX-ST40F
Price: RM2,399 – RM1,499

Samsung's latest Sound Tower lineup combines power, portability and dynamic lighting in one package. The MX-ST50F delivers 240W of output with dual woofers and dome tweeters for up to 18 hours of playtime, while the MX-ST40F offers 160W with 12 hours of battery life. Both models feature 360° audio projection, splash-resistant builds, party lights that sync with music and support for group play via Auracast. Through the Samsung Sound Tower app, users can access DJ booth and karaoke Mode, with launch promos including free Shure microphones until Nov 30.



Marshall Bromley 750
Price: RM5,899

The Bromley 750 marks Marshall's debut in the party speaker scene. It delivers 360° True Stereophonic sound, over 40 hours of playtime and dual mic and instrument inputs for live performances. A sound character knob to switch between dynamic and loud modes, while built-in stage lighting offers three presets that pulse with the beat. Designed with a metal grille and water-based PU leather wrap, its IP54-rated for splash and dirt resistance, includes wheels and handles for easy mobility. Available at selected retailers: Harvey Norman and TMT.



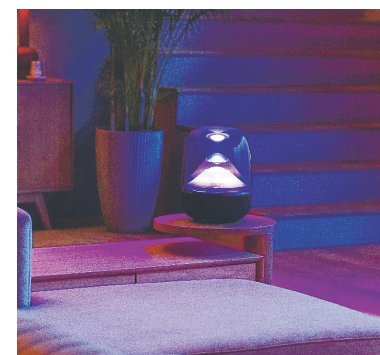
Huawei FreeBuds 7i
Price: RM329

The Huawei FreeBuds 7i delivers premium wireless audio with Intelligent Dynamic ANC 4.0 that cancels up to 55dB of noise for uninterrupted listening. Powered by an quad-magnet dynamic driver and 10-band EQ tuning, it produces rich, detailed sound with deep bass and crisp highs. Built for all-day use, the earbuds offer up to 35 hours of total battery life with the charging case, fast charging that gives four hours of playback in just 10 minutes, and dual-device connectivity for seamless switching. Available in pink, white and black, each pair includes a one-year Loss Care plan.



Soundcore R60i NC
Price: RM189

Soundcore's R60i NC earbuds bring adaptive ANC up to -52dB, Hi-Res Audio with LDAC, and AI translation for over 100 languages. Powered by six beamforming microphones with real-time noise filtering, they ensure clear calls and immersive playback. The earbuds offer up to 50 hours of total playtime (10 hours per charge), low-latency Game Mode, dual-device connectivity and IP55 water resistance. Available in black, white, blue and pink, they come with a free Anker charging accessory during the launch promotion.



Harman Kardon – Aura Studio 5 and SoundSticks 5
Price: RM1,599 – RM1,899

Harman Kardon's latest speaker duo blends design and performance with signature elegance. The Aura Studio 5 features a reimagined dome design with six full-range drivers, a subwoofer and a precision tweeter powered by Constant Sound Field technology for immersive 360° sound. Its multi-layered lighting projection includes five nature-inspired themes, adjustable via the Harman Kardon One app. Meanwhile, the SoundSticks 5 modernises the transparent silhouette with three-way acoustics, dual tweeters, mid-range drivers and a down-firing subwoofer.

BUILDING on the success of its debut season, PropertyGuru Malaysia's puppet series, #BelajarBersamaRosemah returns with season two. This time, Rosemah is pulling back the curtain on one of the biggest challenges facing today's home seekers: property scams and unverified agents.

With these issues on the rise, PropertyGuru Malaysia continues its mission to protect home seekers through education and awareness.

Season two of #BelajarBersamaRosemah champions scam awareness & trust, delivering bite-sized lessons on spotting red flags, verifying licensed agents and reporting suspicious activity.

The first two episodes, *Jangan Cepat Percaya* and *Bila Rasa Shark Wasangka*, see Rosemah using her signature wit to expose the tricks behind fake listings and impersonator agents turning real-life scam scenarios into relatable, eye-opening lessons that help Malaysians stay sharp and property-smart.

The newly-released third episode *Ada Udang Di Sebalik Mee?* dives into the hidden traps behind too-good-to-be-true property deals, showing viewers how to spot red flags before it is too late. All three episodes are now live on PropertyGuru Malaysia's social platforms. Later in the season, Rosemah will also walk the streets to interview passersbys who are

Social web series to educate on property market security

➤ Leveraging humour, puppetry, storytelling to combat local housing scams

home seekers for their honest and unfiltered opinions.

"Trust has been at the heart of everything we've done this year, from launching the Verified Badge to driving awareness about safe property practices. #BelajarBersamaRosemah is our way of continuing our mission to educate the general public on serious topics like scams and verification by leveraging on humour and storytelling," said PropertyGuru Malaysia's marketing director Kar Wai Low.

Between 2019 and 2023, over 1,500 Malaysians lost nearly RM60 million to unlicensed property agents, according to the Board of Valuers, Appraisers, Estate Agents and Property Managers, also known as LPPEH.

In response, PropertyGuru



Join Rosemah as she educates people on how to stay smart, safe and scam-free in the property world.

introduced the Verified Badge on its platform, a trust marker for an active Real Estate Negotiator, Real Estate Agent or Probationary

Estate Agent registered with LPPEH. Through a secure verification process that confirms an agent's identity and active

licence status, the badge helps Malaysians engage confidently with legitimate professionals when buying, selling or renting a home.

Kicking clubhouse invites fans for matchday mania

GUINNESS, the official beer of the Premier League, has found a home at the Guinness Clubhouse – a first-of-its-kind, football-themed venue in Kuala Lumpur.

Available from now until the end of February 2026, eligible guests can book a complimentary overnight experience built around the Premier League's biggest match nights.

Set across three storeys, Guinness Clubhouse brings together the worlds of football and Guinness under one roof. With every corner designed to feel like a match night venue worth staying in for, hardcore fans who are cheering on their favourite teams to friends simply looking for a good night in are sure to be entertained with football-themed activities, bold Guinness touches and plenty of moments built to be shared.

Guests who book a night at Guinness Clubhouse can look forward to:

➤ Catching live Premier League matches on a giant projector with surround sound recreating the

atmosphere of a football stadium right in the living room. Ideal for those who live for the game.

➤ Sharing a bite or two from the fully stocked kitchen and pantry– featuring Guinness-infused snacks and match-night essentials–made for the ones who come for the snacks.

➤ Settling old scores upstairs in the Play Zone with foosball, table football and the pool table, ideal for the friendly rivals in every group.

➤ Ending the night comfortably in Guinness and football-branded bedrooms that can house up to 20 guests, complete with a starter pack featuring Guinness Draught in a can for those who want to stay on after the final whistle.

Only a handful of weekend stays are available from now until February 2026, timed to coincide with the Premier League games of the season. Each booking is for one night only, guests can choose to stay Friday, Saturday or Sunday nights.

"Guinness Clubhouse is a space made for different fans to come



Every corner is designed to feel like a match night worth staying in for.



The Guinness Clubhouse is a first-of-its-kind, football-themed stay in Kuala Lumpur.

together, be it for football, the food or just the company – with a shared love for Guinness and a good time," said Guinness Malaysia marketing manager Joyce Lim.



End the night in comfort in Guinness and football-branded bedrooms that can house up to 20 guests.



Share a bite or two from the fully stocked kitchen and pantry.



Catch live Premier League matches on a giant projector with surround sound.



Built-in security, not bolted on

➤ Samsung advancing safety in home appliances

AS security breaches caused by invisible threats continue to occur, consumer awareness and related regulations across regions are being continuously revised.

It is now evident security can no longer be an afterthought. With some people merging artificial intelligence (AI) into everyday life, now there are many invisible pathways for threats to infiltrate.

Given these changes, it is more important than ever to build robust security frameworks and create systems that notify users of changes, especially at home.

For this reason, Samsung has been working to redefine how digital safety is built into everyday life. The company is making the AI Home a reality, with security as a key pillar. Its security solutions, including Knox Matrix and Knox Vault, have been applied to a wide range of home appliances, helping create a significantly safer and more secure home environment.

Security has long been priority

While 2024 marked the first time Samsung Knox was introduced for home appliances, it has been working on embedded security for over a decade.

Back in 2011, as it was exploring appliances that could serve as early-stage home controllers, internal research had already begun finding ways to prevent data theft.

According to Samsung Electronics head of security lab for digital appliances business Lee Changhoon, real momentum began with the launch of the refrigerator with Family Hub. It integrated services that could store personal data - such as schedules on a calendar - and leveraged Samsung account information. It also allowed users to remotely connect and control their refrigerator via SmartThings.

“Back then, IoT was still new and there was limited awareness of the security challenges associated with IoT devices. It wasn’t easy to get started. We had to consider what standards and security models would be appropriate for home appliances, and it required significant technological investment,” Lee recalled.

Coincidentally, this was also when a type of malware that infected IoT devices first emerged. The arrival of a malware that targeted connected devices around the same time that Samsung’s IoT refrigerator released, marked a paradigm shift. It drove him to accelerate security research and development.

Scope of security requirements expanding

While the debut of Family Hub raised awareness about the need for appliance security, the expansion of SmartThings deepened the technical demands.

“There’s simply more to consider.



Samsung is making AI Home a reality with security solutions, including Knox Matrix and Knox Vault.

With SmartThings, some functions may involve basic data exchange, while others could handle more personal information. For example, the Map View feature allows users to see multiple connected devices at a glance. However, it also means that devices must share data with one another, which increases the number and complexity of possible use cases.

“This shifts the focus from securing individual devices to ensuring inter-device security within a connected environment. Looking ahead, as technologies that incorporate AI continue to advance, even more use cases and threats must be anticipated.

“That’s why it is becoming increasingly important to establish clear security criteria, which decide how security should be applied and how it must be reflected in product design from the outset,” Lee noted.

The evolution of product features has also accelerated the adoption of new security technologies. As devices become more advanced and their capabilities expand, security

measures must evolve to meet those new demands.

Over time, the company has steadily built up its security technologies and accumulated valuable know-hows through a range of experiences. This is why, at a time when security has become a top priority, the company can confidently position it front and centre.

Furthermore, it has achieved significant advancements in security through its mobile business, which is one of the most personal and security-sensitive product categories.

Leveraging these technologies, and with a broad portfolio that spans TVs to mobile devices, the company has been able to extend its security innovations across business divisions, establishing a robust protection framework in home appliances.

Abilities thoroughly tested and proven

“The appeal of a smart home lies in how appliances adapt to you and

are easy to control. But if your personal data is at risk of leaking, you simply can’t feel secure. We’ve been consistently investing in this space for over a decade,” he added.

In fact, the strength of its security system has also been verified with several third-party certifications. As a key example of this, multiple products have been verified at level “Diamond” under UL Solutions Marketing Claim Verification IoT Security Rating Programme.

To earn this verification, which is the highest level, a product must satisfy 56 detailed criteria, across 33 evaluation items in six core domains.

These criteria cover a wide range of aspects, including software updates, data encryption and system management. The evaluation is thorough and designed to ensure compatibility with various international security standards.

To make custom AI appliances, prepared for future threats

At a recent global conference,

Samsung addressed the future of security while introducing Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC), a new and lesser-known data encryption technology.

This type of protection is becoming increasingly necessary because as quantum computing advances, current encryption algorithms may eventually become vulnerable to decryption. To stay ahead of this potential threat, Samsung is implementing PQC within Knox Matrix in home appliances.

While some may question whether it is too early to be thinking about post-quantum security, Samsung is taking a long-term view to ensure protection is in place for its customers.

Home appliances are typically used for around 10 years after purchase.

Considering that product lifecycle, it believes it is critical to prepare now for risks that may become real in the future. That is the mindset driving its vision for the smart home.

MOVIE REVIEW

BY AMEEN HAZIZI

AFTER a quieter stretch in his career, comedian Aziz Ansari makes his feature directorial debut with *Good Fortune*, a supernatural comedy that features him with Seth Rogen, Keanu Reeves, Keke Palmer and Sandra Oh.

The film, which runs a brisk 97 minutes, marks a triumphant return for Aziz following the shelving of *Being Mortal* and the controversy that briefly derailed his career. What results is both a redemption story and a witty look at inequality in modern life.

The story follows Arj, a struggling gig worker played by Aziz, whose life keeps spiraling downward as he deals with unemployment and homelessness. His luck changes when he meets Gabriel, a rookie angel played by Reeves, whose usual task is stopping people from texting while driving. Wanting to make a bigger difference, Gabriel decides to teach Arj that money is not the key to happiness by swapping his life with that of his rich boss Jeff, played by Rogen.

What begins as an experiment soon unravels as Arj indulges in luxury, Gabriel loses his wings and Jeff struggles with poverty. All three men are forced to confront hard truths about privilege, compassion and the real cost of success.

Beyond the laughs, *Good Fortune* is a thoughtful reflection on class and the struggles faced by gig workers. It asks a simple question: Why should not people who work hard be able to live decently?

Aziz's script uses Los Angeles as a mirror for the imbalance between those who have everything and those fighting to survive.

Him and Rogen give grounded, complementary performances that highlight the contrast between their characters' experiences. Jeff's sudden encounter with poverty humbles him, while Arj's rise to wealth reveals how money can dull empathy. Together, their journeys underline the film's message about how unmitigated capitalism often rewards the wrong kind of ambition and leaves proletariats in the mud.



Director: Aziz Ansari
Cast: Aziz Ansari, Seth Rogen, Keanu Reeves, Keke Palmer, Sandra Oh

E-VALUE 7
ACTING 7
PLOT 8

From left: Gabriel (Reeves), Jeff (Rogen) and Arj (Ansari).

Aziz Ansari's directorial debut tickles hearts

➤ Keanu Reeves plays guardian angel Gabriel in *Good Fortune*

making his journey amusing and quietly tragic.

Keke Palmer shines as Elena, Arj's love interest and a hardware store worker leading a union drive. Her chemistry with Aziz feels natural, while Sandra Oh's role as Gabriel's strict supervisor adds sharp comic timing to the heavenly scenes. The film's brisk pacing, clever editing and Carter Burwell's light score keeps things moving without losing emotional weight.

In the end, *Good Fortune* works well because it combines social awareness with genuine warmth. It is funny, heartfelt and honest about the ways people search for meaning in a world obsessed with wealth.



Arj (left) meets Gabriel for the first time after losing his car. – PICS FROM IMDB

Meghan Markle set for big screen cameo, Netflix series geared for second season

PRINCE Harry's wife Meghan Markle is set to make her return to the big screen, with a small cameo role in a film being shot around Los Angeles.

The Duchess of Sussex was reportedly shooting scenes for *Close Personal Friends*, which features *Emily in Paris* star Lily Collins, alongside Jack Quaid, Brie Larson and Henry Golding.

Entertainment title *Variety* said the comedy "revolves around a 'regular' couple that meets a celebrity couple while on a trip to Santa Barbara".

Markle starred in legal romp *Suits* for seven seasons before her fairytale wedding to the second son of Britain's King Charles. But she has not acted in seven years, after indicating she was giving up the profession.

The couple, who lives in

California after a bust-up with the British royal family, no longer have access to the public purse, relying instead on a pricey deal with Netflix and Markle's nascent lifestyle brand.

The Netflix deal has spawned the popular series *With Love, Meghan* which features Markle as a thriving domestic maven in a fictionalised home, hosting guests, harvesting honey and mixing bath salts.

Despite being blasted by critics as "pointless", the series has been extended for a second season and a holiday special is due in December.

The couple have struggled to capture the public's imagination since *Harry & Meghan*, a six-episode tell-all about their relationship and exit from the House of Windsor, which drew 23 million views in its first four days – a record for a

Netflix documentary.

Harry and his wife stepped away from royal duties in 2020 as relations with his family, especially his brother William, spiralled.

His memoir *Spare* in January 2023 upset Buckingham Palace with its criticism of family members, including Prince William's wife Catherine of Wales and his stepmother Queen Camilla.

He has since voiced hopes for a reconciliation and in September met Charles, 76, in London, months after it was revealed the monarch is undergoing treatment for an undisclosed cancer.

Harry's uncle Andrew was stripped of his royal titles last month, after years of scandal over his friendship with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, an acquaintance of US President Donald Trump. – AFP



Markle is set to return to acting with *Close Personal Friends*. – PIC FROM GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP



Rouri404 links with electronic artistes for remixes

FOLLOWING the release of single *Body (I Want You)* earlier this year, genre-bending artiste Rouri404 has released a set of *Body (I Want You)* remixes in collaboration with electronic artistes Kets4eki and Parv0.

The multi-faceted nature of the original track serves as the foundation for these two unique interpretations of Rouri404's latest single.

On working with breakout artistes on these remixes, Rouri404 shared: "I really enjoyed seeing what Kets4eki and Parv0 did with *Body (I Want You)*. Kets4eki did an amazing remix with a more party/pop oriented sound, while Parv0 does an amazing rave kind of rendition that would kill at any DJ set. I'm excited to see fan reaction to both, it's a very fun combination of sounds."

Where the original song begins with crisp, plucky synths, Kets4eki builds the track gradually to its crescendo with smoother production elements. There is an extra high-tempo layer to this remix, bringing a new vibration to the track. Kets4eki hops in with a vocal addition, building to the lyrical foundation presented in Rouri404's initial release.

Parv0, on the other hand, starts the track with a dreamier sound, drawing from the energy of early 2000s era rave with a touch of house. While Rouri404's classic distorted vocal remains throughout, Parv0 manipulates risers to rhythmically phase in and out to build a cohesive experience throughout the entire track.

Both remixes take very different paths to reach a final product. The clear difference that listeners can hear across the two tracks not only showcases the skill of Kets4eki and Parv0, but is also a testament to the dynamic nature of Rouri404's personal sound.



Rouri404 leans into guitar-driven rock and emo, a showcase for his emerging talents as a lyricist, arranger and executive producer.
- PIC BY ATTIKEN VEGA



Lamar performs during Super Bowl LIX Chiefs vs Eagles Apple Music Halftime Show at Caesars Superdome in New Orleans.
- AFPIC

Kendrick Lamar leads Grammy noms with *GNX*

➤ Lady Gaga ranks second with seven nods

RAPPER Kendrick Lamar leads the nominations for the 2026 Grammy Awards with nine, the Recording Academy announced last week - fresh off winning five golden gramophones at the last gala honoring the best in music.

Lady Gaga ranked second among performers with seven nods for her *Mayhem* album, followed by a trio of artistes tied at six - Bad Bunny, Sabrina Carpenter and R&B singer-songwriter Leon Thomas.

Lamar will vie for album, record and song of the year honors at the 68th Grammys, which will take place in Los Angeles on Feb 1, 2026.

Also competing for the coveted best album award are: Gaga, Bad Bunny, Carpenter, Thomas, hip-hop duo Clipse (Pusha T and Malice), pop superstar Justin Bieber and Tyler, the Creator.

Lamar, 38, dominated the Grammys in February this year with five awards for the wildly infectious *Not Like Us*, his viral diss track targeting fellow rapper Drake.

A week later, the Pulitzer Prize winner commanded one of the world's most high-profile stages as the Super Bowl's halftime show headliner, performing a string of classics - including the knockout blow in his battle with his Canadian rival.

But the song did not feature on his most recent album *GNX*, the source of his nominated material this time out.

Lady Gaga, 39, made a splashy comeback to touring with *Mayhem*, her collection of full-on pop bangers with a dark edge that embraces her dramatic side. She also will compete for album, record and song of the year, as will Bad Bunny.

The 31-year-old superstar, born Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, also has a pile of nods for next week's Latin Grammys and will headline the next Super Bowl halftime show in February 2026.

He completed a three-month residency in his native Puerto Rico this year and hosted the season opener of *Saturday Night Live*.

He is set to open a world tour in support of "Debi Tirar Mas Fotos" (I Should Have Taken More Photos) later this month in the Dominican Republic.

Other artistes in the mix are rapper DoeChii and R&B artiste Sza, each with five nominations.

Golden, the massive hit song from Netflix's animated smash *KPop Demon Hunters*, earned three Grammy nods, including one for song of the year.

And up for best new artiste are Alex Warren, girl group Katseye, Britain's Olivia Dean, TikTok dancer-turned-singer Addison Rae, The Marias, Sombr, Lola Young and Thomas - who was already a Grammy winner two years ago for producing a song by Sza.

Producers Jack Antonoff and Cirkut each earned seven nominations.

There will be two new categories at the 2026 gala - best album cover and best traditional country album. The existing best country album category is now called best contemporary country album.

More diverse?

Industry watchers will be dissecting the full list of nominees in all 95 categories to see if changes made by the Recording Academy, which hands out the awards, have addressed concerns about diversity.

More than 3,800 new members were admitted to the academy, greatly expanding the number of eligible Grammy voters. Half of those new members are aged 39 or younger, and 58% of them are people of colour, the academy announced earlier this week.

Invitations were also offered to all members of the Latin Recording Academy, which will hand out the Latin Grammys next week in Las Vegas.

"This year's class reflects the vibrancy of today's diverse music landscape," Recording Academy CEO Harvey Mason Jr said in a statement.

Uber super star Taylor Swift did not get a nomination for *The Life of a Showgirl*, because the album, released in Oct, is not eligible for the 2026 Grammys as the window closed on Aug 30.

But, look for the pop megastar to be front and centre in the 2027 edition. - AFP

K-pop girl group Fifty Fifty returns

K-POP sensation Fifty Fifty has made a return with its latest single *Too Much Part 1*, with the project marking a new chapter in the group's musical journey, capturing the modern sentiment of embracing love's beginnings with fearless, playful curiosity.

The single balances Fifty Fifty's vibrancy and playful charm, with its main track *Eny Meeny Miny Moe* is likened to the thrill of a first crush turned into pop perfection. With a chanting hook, beats and synths, the quintet makes the nervous excitement of young love irresistibly catchy.

Meanwhile, *Skittlez* is a playful, sensual track where minimalist hip-hop vibes meet glossy vocals that make each lyric pop with colour and energy.

Considered a bonus, the third track *Eny Meeny Miny Moe (Eng. ver)* is a global version

that retains the cute, lively charm while adding a confident pop flair, as Fifty Fifty shows that IT still has what it takes to turn love, playfulness and emotion into infectious K-pop music.

The beloved girl group has been making significant strides in the global music scene. Its breakout hit *Cupid* not only became the longest-charting K-pop song in Billboard Hot 100 history at 25 consecutive weeks, but also made the group the first female K-pop act to reach the top 10 on the UK Singles Chart, peaking at number eight.

The group further solidified its rising star status by winning the K-Pop Song of the Year for *Cupid (Twin Version)* at the 2024 iHeartRadio Music Awards. The group also captivated audiences with shows during its US tour last year and an album release earlier this year.



From left: Keena, Chanelle Moon, Yewon, Athena and Hana are the members of Fifty Fifty.

- PIC BY ATTRAKT ENTERTAINMENT



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302 Jobs



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- SPM level with at least two years of experience.
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Requirement

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- Attractive commission package and incentives.
- Able to start immediately.
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322 Notices

NATIONWIDE DIGNITY (M) SDN. BHD.
[Co. No. 199801002186 (458312-D)]
(Incorporated In Malaysia)

NOTICE OF REDUCTION OF SHARE CAPITAL

Notice is hereby given by the above named Company pursuant to Section 117(10) of the Companies Act 2016 as follows:

- That the Company on **7 November 2025** passed a Special Resolution whereby its Share Capital was approved to be reduced from **RM550,000.00** comprising 550,000 ordinary shares at RM1.00 per share to **RM210,000.00** to be effected by returning **RM340,000.00** representing RM0.618 per share payable in cash to the shareholders registered as at **20 December 2025**.
- That the Special Resolution together with the Solvency Statement made pursuant to **Section 113** of the Companies Act 2016 be lodged to the Director General of the Inland Revenue Board and the Registrar of Companies in compliance with **Section 117(1)** of the Companies Act 2016.
- That a Creditor of the Company may, within six (6) weeks of the date of the Special Resolution, apply to the Court under **Section 118** of the Companies Act 2016 for cancellation of the Special Resolution.

Dated this : **13 November 2025**

Imran Zakaria
Director

322 Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI PULAU PINANG DALAM KEBAKARAN NO. PA-29NCC-108-02/2025

Per:
Ong Chee Beng
[No. K/P: 650401-07-5033 / A0202270]
Penghutang Penghakiman

Ex parte:
Hong Leong Bank Berhad
[No. Syarikat: 193401000023 (97141-X)]
Pemintuan Penghakiman

NOTIS

Dalam perkara Petisyen Pemintuan Penghakiman Terpinda bertarikh 19-08-2025

Kepada:
Ong Chee Beng
Menara Riverview
7-17-10, Jalan Jelutong
11600 Georgetown
Pulau Pinang

Dan/atau
369, Lebuhr Pantai,
10300 Pulau Pinang

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa satu Petisyen Pemintuan Terpinda telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh Hong Leong Bank Berhad yang beralamat di Tingkat 30, Menara Hong Leong, No. 6, Jalan Damania, Bukit Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur dan Mahkamah telah memerintahkan supaya Petisyen Pemintuan Terpinda tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu secara penyampaian ganti dengan menampalkan salinan-salinannya berserta satu salinan termeterai Perintah Untuk Penyampaian Ganti pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Tinggi di Pulau Pinang dan di tempat ketara di premis terakhir Penghutang Penghakiman di Menara Riverview, 7-17-10, Jalan Jelutong, 11600 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang dan/atau 369, Lebuhr Pantai, 10300 Pulau Pinang dan juga dengan menyerahkan Notis ini sekali di dalam akhbar harian tempatan berbahasa Inggeris iaitu "The Sun" dan bahawa penampalan dan penyiaran sedemikian disifatkan penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup akan Petisyen Pemintuan Terpinda tersebut kepada kamu Ong Chee Beng [No. K/P: 650401-07-5033 / A0202270] tujuh (7) hari selepas hari terakhir penampalan atau penyiaran.

DAN SELANJUTNYA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa Petisyen Pemintuan Terpinda tersebut akan didengar di Mahkamah ini pada 11 Disember 2025 pada pukul 9.00 pagi pada hari yang mana kamu Ong Chee Beng [No. K/P: 650401-07-5033 / A0202270] dikehendaki hadir, dan jika kamu tidak hadir Mahkamah boleh membuat Perintah Kebankrapan terhadap kamu dalam ketahadiran kamu.

Petisyen Pemintuan Terpinda tersebut boleh diperiksa oleh kamu atas permohonan di Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh pada 29 Oktober 2025

tantandatangan
.....
MASYITAH BINTI AYOIB
Penolong Kanan Pendaftar
Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia
Georgetown

Notis ini difailkan oleh Tuetan Kek Ooi & Lee Hong, Peguamcara bagi Pemintuan Penghakiman yang dinampalkan di atas dan alamat untuk penyampaian kepadanya ialah di 53, Tingkat 1, Lebuhr Pantai, 10300 Pulau Pinang.

DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISRET DI KUALA LUMPUR DALAM WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN MALAYSIA GUAMAM CIVIL NO. : WA-A72NCC-28803-07/2025

ANTARA
LOW SIANG LIANG
[No. K/P: 820603-14-5545]
Berniaga di bawah Nama & Gaya
TREES TIMBER TRADING & SERVICES
(No. Pendaftaran:
202103151226/003271313-P)

... PLAINTIF

DAN
PERBADANAN PENGURUSAN ONE MENERUNG
(No. Pendaftaran: 2708)

... DEFENDAN

DAN
DATUK VIJEYARATNAM A/L V.THAMOTHARAM PILLAY

... PIHAK KETIGA

DAN
LOW POH WENG

... PIHAK KEEMPAT

NOTIS IKLAN

Kepada:-
Pihak Keempat
Low Poh Weng
C-21-2 One Menerung,
1 Jalan Menerung, Bukit Bandaraya,
59100 Kuala Lumpur

dan/atau
Pihak Keempat
Low Poh Weng
C-21-2 One Menerung,
1 Jalan Menerung, Bukit Bandaraya,
59100 Kuala Lumpur

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa satu Notis Pihak Keempat telah dikeluarkan ke atas kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh Pihak Ketiga yang dinampalkan di atas, **DATUK VIJEYARATNAM A/L V.THAMOTHARAM PILLAY** [No. K/P: 511031-05-5157] yang mempunyai alamat penyampaian di No. 115, Jalan Ara, Bangsar Baru, 59100 Kuala Lumpur dan Mahkamah ini telah memerintahkan supaya Notis Pihak Keempat bertarikh 25 September 2025 tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu dengan menampalkan salinan Notis Pihak Keempat berserta satu salinan termeterai Perintah Untuk Penyampaian Ganti bertarikh 31 Oktober 2025 di papan kenyataan di pejabat Pihak Pengintuan dan penyerahan di Guahouse kondominium One Menerung Condominium sebagai mewakili penampalan di alamat-alamat Pihak Keempat yang tersebut kepada kamu Ong Chee Beng [No. K/P: 650401-07-5033 / A0202270] dan juga dengan menyerahkan Notis ini sekali di dalam akhbar harian tempatan berbahasa Inggeris iaitu "The Sun" dan bahawa penampalan dan penyiaran sedemikian disifatkan penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup akan Petisyen Pemintuan Terpinda tersebut kepada kamu Ong Chee Beng [No. K/P: 650401-07-5033 / A0202270] dan jika kamu tidak hadir Mahkamah boleh membuat Perintah Kebankrapan terhadap kamu dalam ketahadiran kamu.

Petisyen Pemintuan Terpinda tersebut boleh diperiksa oleh kamu atas permohonan di Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh pada 06 November 2025.

tantandatangan
.....
MAHKAMAH RENDAH KUALA LUMPUR

Notis Iklan ini telah difailkan oleh Tuetan Arulampalam & Co; Peguamcara Pihak Ketiga yang mempunyai alamat penyampaian di No. 55, Jalan SS18/5F, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Tel: 03-5361 7011
[Ruj: LG/561/2025 (N/J)]

322 Notices

PERISYTIHARAN JUALAN DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI SUNGAI PETANI PERMOHONAN UNTUK PERLAKSANAAN NO: KB-38-975-09/2025

Dalam perkara mengenai Seksyen 256 dan 257 Kanun Tanah Negara, 1965 Dan

Dalam perkara mengenai Gadaian Perserahan No: 9904/2024 (bertarikh : 25/04/2024) ke atas semua bahagian tanah yang dipegang di bawah Hakmilik Sementara No. H.S.(D): 131568, Lot 67683, Mukim Bandar Amanjaya, Daerah Kuala Muda, Kedah Dan

Dalam perkara mengenai Aturan 83 Kaedah-Kaedah Mahkamah, 2012

ANTARA
Public Islamic Bank Berhad (No. Syarikat : 14328-V) ...PLAINTIF

DAN
Rosidi Bin Lazim (No. Kad Pengenalan : 800130075525) ...DEFENDAN

Menurut Perintah Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia di SUNGAI PETANI mengenai Perintah Jualan dan Perintah bertarikh 20 Mei 2025 dan 28 Oktober 2025, adalah dengan ini disyifatkan bahawa Timbalan Pendaftar/Penolong Kanan Pendaftar Pusat Operasi e-Lelong di Kuantan

AKAN MENJUAL SECARA LELONG AWAM
Pada Hari Selasa, 9 Disember 2025, Pada Jam 11:00 pagi,
SECARA ELEKTRONIK DI LAMAN WEB e-LELONG, PUSAT OPERASI e-LELONG, KOMPLEKS MAHKAMAH KUANTAN, PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR

NOTA: Bakal pembeli adalah dinasihatkan agar membuat carian Hakmilik secara rasmi di Pejabat Tanah dan memeriksa semua tanggungan, bebanan serta mengenal pasti dengan tepat hartanah tersebut sebelum jualan lelongan dijalankan.

Sila layari <https://lelong.kehakiman.gov.my/bidderweb>

BUTIR-BUTIR HAKMILIK:
No. Hakmilik : Hakmilik Sementara No. H.S.(D): 131568
No. Lot : Lot 67683
Mukim / Daerah / Negeri : Bandar Amanjaya / Kuala Muda / Kedah
Pegangan : Hakmilik Kekal
No. Petak/No. Tingkat/No. Bangunan :
Keluasan Tanah : 1600.0000000000 kaki persegi
148.6000000000 meter persegi
Pemilik Berdaftar Syarat Nyata : Rosidi Bin Lazim

Tanah yang terkandung dalam hakmilik ini hendaklah digunakan sebagai tapak satu bangunan untuk kediaman (Tapak Rumah Teres) sahaja.
Pindah milik pertama hendaklah mengikut keputusan Majlis Mesyuarat Kerajaan Kertas No. 6 (C) 340/2014 bertarikh 05 November 2014 dan pindahmilik seterusnya hendaklah mendapat kebenaran Pihak Berkhasa Negeri.
The subject property has charged to Public Islamic Bank Berhad vide Presentation No. 9904/2024 registered on 15th May 2024.

Kawasan Rizab
Kaveat : A private caveat lodged by Public Islamic Bank Berhad vide Presentation No. 8142/2022 registered on 26th October 2022.

LOKASI DAN PERIHAL HARTANAH:
Hartanah tersebut adalah An intermediate unit single storey terraced house yang beralamat pos di No. 357, Jalan Tanjung 5, Bandar Amanjaya, 08000, Sungai Petani, Kedah.

HARGA RIZAB:
Hartanah tersebut akan dijual atas "sepertimana sedia ada" tertakluk kepada satu harga rizab sebanyak RM 230,000.00 (RINGGIT MALAYSIA: DUA RATUS TIGA PULUH RIBU SAHAJA) dan kepada syarat-syarat jualan yang dilampirkan. Pembida yang berminta hendaklah menandatangani 10% daripada harga rizab dalam bentuk Bank Draft di atas nama PUBLIC ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD 1 HARI BEKERJA sebelum tarikh lelong awam. Baki harga belian hendaklah dibayar oleh pembida yang berjaya kepada PUBLIC ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD dalam tempoh seratus dua puluh (120) hari dari tarikh jualan. Untuk butir-butir selanjutnya, sila berhubung dengan:-

Firma Guaman : WONG-CHOOI & MOHD NOR
Alamat : NO. 27, 1ST & 2ND FLOOR
JALAN MAJU JAYA
PUSAT PERNIAGAAN MAJU JAYA, 14000, PG, MY
No. Telefon : 04-5398855
No. Faks : 04-5395855
No. Rujukan : WCMN(BM)/PBB-HL/2025-068/RS(I)

322 Notices

PERISYTIHARAN JUALAN DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI PULAU PINANG PERMOHONAN UNTUK PERLAKSANAAN NO: PA-38-1352-09/2025

Dalam perkara mengenai Seksyen 256 dan 257 Kanun Tanah Negara, 1965 Dan

Dalam perkara mengenai Gadaian Perserahan No: 0702SC2022003176 (bertarikh : 02/11/2022) ke atas semua bahagian tanah yang dipegang di bawah Hakmilik Strata No. Hakmilik: Geran 1240/M1/7/41, Lot 10089, Mukim 16, Daerah Seberang Perai Utara, Pulau Pinang Dan

Dalam perkara mengenai Aturan 83 Kaedah-Kaedah Mahkamah, 2012

ANTARA
Public Bank Berhad (No. Syarikat : 6463-H) ...PLAINTIF

DAN
Raaviran a/l Segeram (No. Kad Pengenalan : 890226075097) ...DEFENDAN

Menurut Perintah Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia di PULAU PINANG mengenai Perintah Jualan dan Perintah bertarikh 21 Julai 2025 dan 27 Oktober 2025, adalah dengan ini disyifatkan bahawa Timbalan Pendaftar/Penolong Kanan Pendaftar Pusat Operasi e-Lelong di Kuantan

AKAN MENJUAL SECARA LELONG AWAM
Pada Hari Isnin, 8 Disember 2025, Pada Jam 11:00 pagi,
SECARA ELEKTRONIK DI LAMAN WEB e-LELONG, PUSAT OPERASI e-LELONG, KOMPLEKS MAHKAMAH KUANTAN, PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR

NOTA: Bakal pembeli adalah dinasihatkan agar membuat carian Hakmilik secara rasmi di Pejabat Tanah dan memeriksa semua tanggungan, bebanan serta mengenal pasti dengan tepat hartanah tersebut sebelum jualan lelongan dijalankan.

Sila layari <https://lelong.kehakiman.gov.my/bidderweb>

BUTIR-BUTIR HAKMILIK:
No. Hakmilik : Hakmilik Strata No. Hakmilik: Geran 1240/M1/7/41
No. Lot : Lot 10089
Mukim / Daerah / Negeri : 16 / Seberang Perai Utara / Pulau Pinang
Pegangan : Hakmilik Kekal
No. Petak/No. Tingkat/No. Bangunan : 41 / 7 / M1
Keluasan Tanah : 1313.0000000000 kaki persegi
122.0000000000 meter persegi
Pemilik Berdaftar Syarat Nyata : Raaviran a/l Segeram
Pegangan : Petak ini hendaklah digunakan untuk tujuan kondominium sahaja.
Sektan Kepentingan : Tiada
Bebanan / Lain-Lain :
Kawasan Rizab :
Kaveat :

LOKASI DAN PERIHAL HARTANAH:
Hartanah tersebut adalah A Condominium Unit yang beralamat pos di No. A-7-12A, Taman Casa Utopia, Lorong Sungai Dua Utama 34, 13800, Butterworth, Seberang Perai Utara, Pulau Pinang.

HARGA RIZAB:
Hartanah tersebut akan dijual atas "sepertimana sedia ada" tertakluk kepada satu harga rizab sebanyak RM 400,000.00 (RINGGIT MALAYSIA: EMPAT RATUS RIBU SAHAJA) dan kepada syarat-syarat jualan yang dilampirkan. Pembida yang berminta hendaklah menandatangani 10% daripada harga rizab dalam bentuk Bank Draft di atas nama PUBLIC ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD 1 HARI BEKERJA sebelum tarikh lelong awam. Baki harga belian hendaklah dibayar oleh pembida yang berjaya kepada PUBLIC ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD dalam tempoh seratus dua puluh (120) hari dari tarikh jualan. Untuk butir-butir selanjutnya, sila berhubung dengan:-

Firma Guaman : WONG-CHOOI & MOHD NOR
Alamat : NO. 27, 1ST & 2ND FLOOR
JALAN MAJU JAYA
PUSAT PERNIAGAAN MAJU JAYA, 14000, PG, MY
No. Telefon : 04-5398855
No. Faks : 04-5395855
No. Rujukan : WCMN(BM)/PBB-HL/2024-045/RS(I)

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF FM YONG MEDICAL ADVISORY SDN. BHD. (REGISTRATION NO. : 200401009863 (648366-V)) (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act 2016, the Final Meeting of the Company will be held at 83, Jalan SS15/5A, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan on Monday, 15 December 2025, Monday at 1.30 p.m. for the following purposes :-

1. To receive and consider the Liquidator's Statement Of Accounts showing the manner in which the winding up has been conducted and any explanations arising therefrom.

2. To resolve that under Section 518(3)(b) of the Companies Act 2016, that the books, accounts and documents of the Company and of the Liquidator thereof, be destroyed after the expiration of three (3) months from the date of the Final Meeting.

Dated this 13th November, 2025

WONG NYOK HAR (F)
Liquidator

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF LSA VENTURES SDN. BHD. (REGISTRATION NO. : 201801018843 (1280859-U)) (In Member's Voluntary Liquidation)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016, that a Final Meeting of the abovenamed Company will be held at Messrs Rodgers Reidy & Co. (NF2243) at K-3A-13A, No.2, Jalan Solaris, Solaris Mont' Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur on **Monday, 15 December 2025 at 10:00 a.m.** for the purpose: -

To receive the Joint and Several Liquidators' Statement of Accounts showing the manner in which the winding-up has been conducted and the property of the Company disposed of, and of hearing any explanation that may be given by the Joint and Several Liquidators.

LIM TIAN HUAT
CHIANG TENG GUAN
Joint and Several Liquidators

Dated this 13 November 2025

A member of the Company entitled to attend and vote at the above meeting may appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his behalf. A proxy need not be a member of the Company. The instrument appointing a proxy shall be in writing under the hand of the appointor or his attorney duly authorized in writing or, if the appointor is a corporation, either under its common seal or signed by its attorney or by an officer of the Company duly authorized in writing in that behalf. The instrument appointing a proxy must be deposited at the address above, not less than 48 hours before the time for holding the meeting.

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF LSA VENTURES SDN. BHD. (REGISTRATION NO. : 201801018843 (1280859-U)) (In Member's Voluntary Liquidation)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016, that a Final Meeting of the abovenamed Company will be held at Messrs Rodgers Reidy & Co. (NF2243) at K-3A-13A, No.2, Jalan Solaris, Solaris Mont' Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur on **Monday, 15 December 2025 at 10:00 a.m.** for the purpose: -

To receive the Joint and Several Liquidators' Statement of Accounts showing the manner in which the winding-up has been conducted and the property of the Company disposed of, and of hearing any explanation that may be given by the Joint and Several Liquidators.

LIM TIAN HUAT
CHIANG TENG GUAN
Joint and Several Liquidators

Dated this 13 November 2025

A member of the Company entitled to attend and vote at the above meeting may appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his behalf. A proxy need not be a member of the Company. The instrument appointing a proxy shall be in writing under the hand of the appointor or his attorney duly authorized in writing or, if the appointor is a corporation, either under its common seal or signed by its attorney or by an officer of the Company duly authorized in writing in that behalf. The instrument appointing a proxy must be deposited at the address above, not less than 48 hours before the time for holding the meeting.

BY JIM VAN WIJK

CHARLES LECLERC has called for "unity" after Ferrari chairman John Elkann implored the Monegasque and Lewis Hamilton to "focus on driving and talk less" after a double DNF at the Sao Paulo Grand Prix.

Neither Hamilton nor Leclerc have won a race this year, while Hamilton is astonishingly yet to register a grand prix podium in what has been a disappointing debut campaign in Scuderia red. The 40-year-old labelled his season a "nightmare" after the race at Interlagos.

As for Leclerc, as he reflected on a "very difficult weekend" in Brazil, he tried to remain positive in his usual post-race post on Instagram despite his retirement on lap six.

Ferrari F1 driver Leclerc calls for 'unity'

"Disappointing to come back home with nearly no points at all for the team in what is a critical moment of the season to fight for the 2nd place in the constructors championship," Leclerc wrote.

"It's uphill from now and it's clear that only unity can help us turn that situation around in the last 3 races. We'll give it all, as always."

Hamilton was eventually retired by Ferrari on lap 40 in Sao Paulo, having collided with Carlos Sainz's Williams and then Alpine's Franco Colapinto early in the race.

The seven-time world champion also received a five-point penalty for his misjudged attempt to over-

take Colapinto.

Hamilton, though, also intends to keep himself fully focused for the challenges ahead on the track as focus turns towards the next race in Las Vegas.

"In the end, it wasn't the race we wanted," Hamilton said in his *Instagram* post. "It's gutting, especially after some good progress, but we will move on."

"I back my team. I back myself. I will not give up. Not now, not then, not ever."

The next race is the Las Vegas Grand Prix, 20-22 November. Hamilton has never gone a whole F1 season without a top-three finish. – The Independent

SHORTS

Pitches Down Under will suit England: Tresco

ENGLAND'S batters will relish the pace and bounce of Australian wickets during the Ashes series as they will allow Ben Stokes' side to play with their trademark aggression and put home bowlers under pressure, assistant coach Marcus Trescothick said.

Lively Australian tracks are expected to test England's high-tempo "Bazball" style, introduced by head coach Brendon McCullum, but Trescothick said yesterday the tourists are confident they can thrive in those conditions.

"The style of cricket we play is to try and put the bowlers under pressure," Trescothick told reporters in Perth, where his team are preparing for the Nov 21 series opener.

"Playing on bouncy pitches, where the ball comes onto the bat nicely, is something we always talk about trying to get back at home. It suits our style of play, which we're happy with."

"Definitely, the pitches have generally evolved in the last few years in Australia but you still expect them to be quick and bouncy and maybe have a bit more in it for the bowlers compared to years gone by."

Former England captain Alastair Cook suggests the hosts will be wary of playing into England's hands and could spring a surprise in the way they set up the pitches.

"It's a real intrigue which hasn't actually been spoken about that much," Cook said.

"Australia might feel to counter this England batting line-up, when the ball moves, they look more vulnerable."

Pakistan upstage Sri Lanka

PAKISTAN rode on a fighting century from Salman Agha and four wickets from Haris Rauf to beat Sri Lanka by six runs in the opening one-day international in Rawalpindi yesterday.

Salman scored an unbeaten 105 off 87 balls which guided Pakistan to an imposing 299-5 before Haris grabbed 4-61 to keep Sri Lanka to 293-9 in 50 overs, giving the home team 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

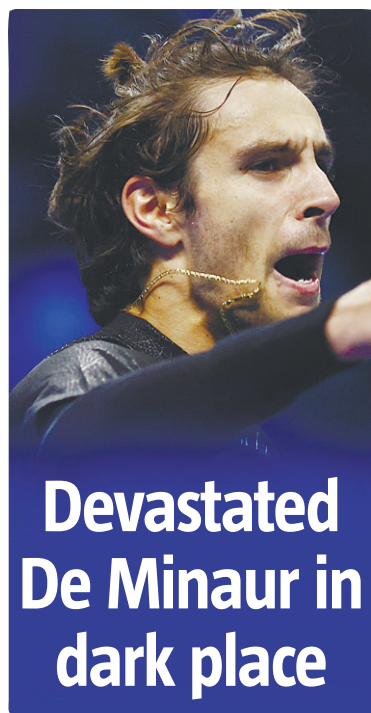
For Sri Lanka, debutant Kamil Mishara, who scored 38, and Pathum Nissanka, who made 29, set the platform with a solid 85-run opening stand before Haris dismissed both the openers and Kusal Mendis (nought) in the space of just five runs.

Pakistan captain Shaheen Shah Afridi said his team put a good total.

"Agha and (Hussain) Talat batted very well to take us to 299," said Shaheen. "A target of 300 was good and then Haris gave us crucial wickets."

Asalanka admitted bowlers conceded extra runs.

"The way Agha and Talat batted, it took the game away," said Asalanka. "We gave away too many runs, it should have been under 270."



Devastated De Minaur in dark place

AFTER Alex de Minaur snatched defeat from the jaws of victory in a devastating loss to Italian Lorenzo Musetti at the ATP Finals yesterday, the Australian said he cannot go on failing that way.

De Minaur battled back from going one set down to force a decider where he held a 5-3 lead, only for Musetti to win four games in succession in an incredible round-robin match in Turin that the Italian won 7-5, 3-6, 7-5.

"I think it's probably a good thing I don't express my feelings right now because they're quite dark," De Minaur said.

"It just feels like it's been that type of year where I've had what feels like a whole lot of matches that should have gone my way and just somehow don't."

At the US Open in September De Minaur won the first set against Felix Auger-Aliassime but ended up losing his sixth Grand Slam quarterfinal.

At Wimbledon in the fourth round, he won the opening set 6-1 against Novak Djokovic only to suffer a similar fate.

"It's something that if it doesn't get sorted, it's going to eat me alive," the Australian said.

"I need to get it sorted sooner rather than later. I don't know how many times I can deal with a loss like this one."

De Minaur lost his opening Jimmy Connors Group match against world No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz on Sunday, and takes on last year's losing finalist Taylor Fritz in his final round-robin match today, where defeat would end his time in Turin.

The Australian was asked what else he can do to avoid another crushing loss.

"Just have a talk to my team and try to sort out these issues because these are issues that can't keep happening," De Minaur replied.

"I mean, if I really want to be serious about taking the next step in my career, these matches, I can't lose them. I just can't." – Reuters



Carlos Alcaraz (left) in action against to USA's Taylor Fritz during the ATP Finals in Turin yesterday. – AFP/PICT

CARLOS ALCARAZ came under extreme pressure before overcoming Taylor Fritz 6-7(2), 7-5, 6-3 in a thrilling match at the ATP Finals yesterday, before Italy's Lorenzo Musetti beat Alex de Minaur in a dramatic encounter.

Musetti's 7-5, 3-6, 7-5 win means that all four players can still make the semifinals, with the Italian facing Alcaraz, on two wins from two, and Fritz taking on De Minaur today to close out the Jimmy Connors Group, with the top two making the last four.

Last year's finalist Fritz played the tennis of his life, as both men served up the best encounter of the season-ending championships so far, but the American ran out of steam as Alcaraz turned on the style and took the deciding set with ease.

"It was pretty tight, I was struggling more than him in the first set," Alcaraz said. "I wasn't serving well, and I think he was pretty comfortable from the baseline, from everywhere."

Alcaraz needs one more victory to guarantee the year-ending world No. 1 spot.

Yesterday's clash was a battle

from the opening game, with Fritz taking nine minutes to hold after hitting three aces but also facing two break points. The American forced three break points in the next game before the pair traded breaks.

Fritz raced into a 5-2 lead in the tiebreak and smashed two aces to take the set. At 2-2 in the second, Alcaraz was rattled, his drop shots which earlier beat Fritz began to fall short but, after losing advantage five times, the Spaniard held on.

Alcaraz got lucky with a shot that hit the net but crept over in the final game of the second set and broke to take the match to a third, where the Spaniard outclassed an exhausted Fritz.

"I was really relieved after the win because of everything I went through during the match," Alcaraz said.

"I wasn't feeling the ball as well as I was in the first round, but I'm really happy that I found a way to come back."

Musetti looked down and out with De Minaur serving for the match but those few who left early to beat the traffic missed out on a stunning comeback.

The Italian took the first set after

breaking serve at 5-5, and De Minaur survived three break points in the second set opener before finding his first break points of the match at 4-4 and making them count.

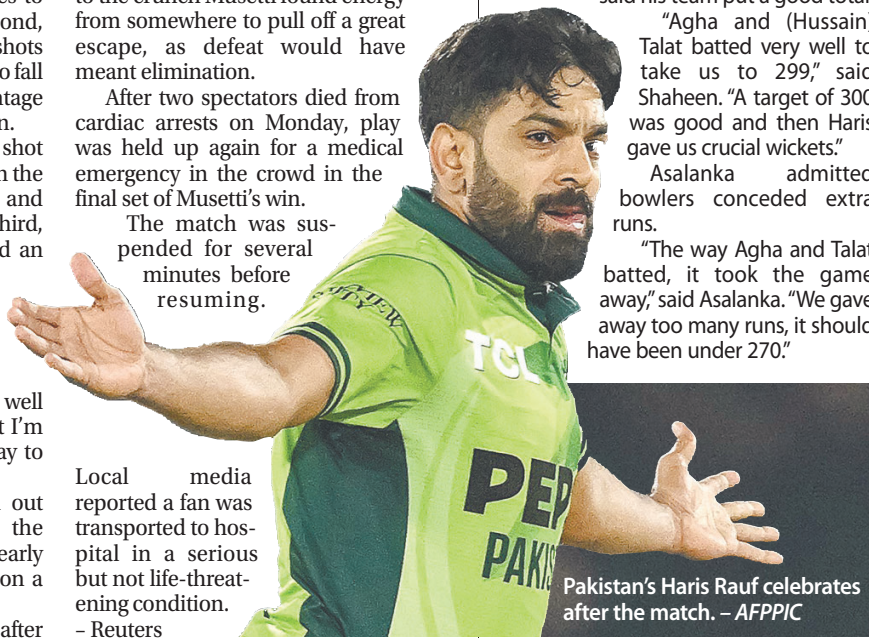
De Minaur had control in the final set at 2-0 up, but when it came to the crunch Musetti found energy from somewhere to pull off a great escape, as defeat would have meant elimination.

After two spectators died from cardiac arrests on Monday, play was held up again for a medical emergency in the crowd in the final set of Musetti's win.

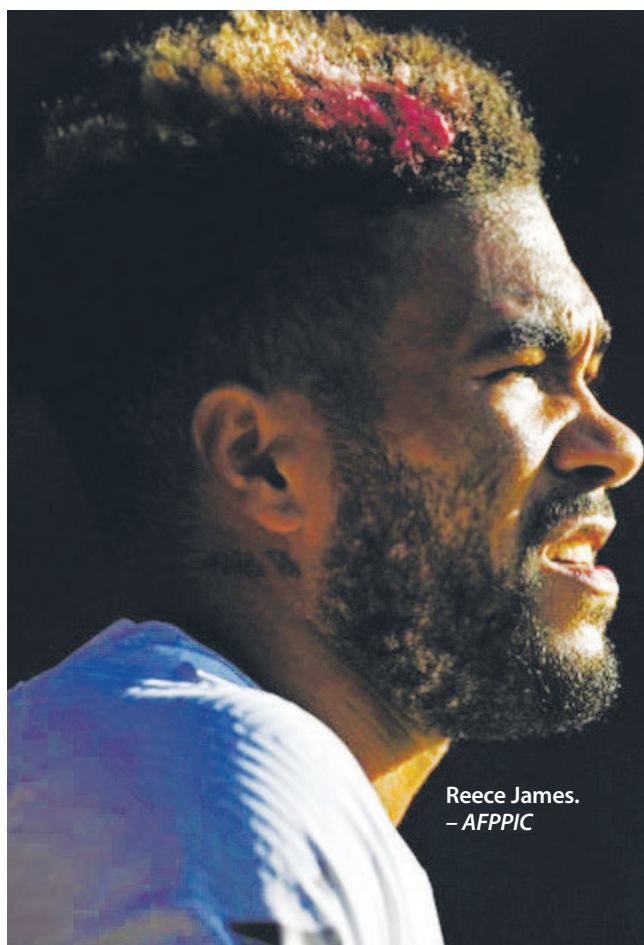
The match was suspended for several minutes before resuming.

Local media reported a fan was transported to hospital in a serious but not life-threatening condition.

– Reuters



Pakistan's Haris Rauf celebrates after the match. – AFP/PICT



Reece James.
– AFPIC

REECE JAMES has issued a World Cup heat warning and confessed it will be “super difficult” for England to triumph in the tournament.

James endured blistering 40°C temperatures last summer when Chelsea claimed the Club World Cup in the United States.

The Chelsea captain also cautioned that the playing surfaces were below par and revealed matches took place during “hot and humid” conditions due to kickoff scheduling.

However, James acknowledged this will put England at a significant disadvantage with enormous hurdles for Thomas Tuchel to navigate towards World Cup glory.

The England defender said: “It’s super difficult conditions to play in that heat, especially us playing in England – there’s not anything like that before.

“You feel the heat the minute you step outside the hotel. The conditions are super hot, they are difficult conditions to play in and the pitches when we were there weren’t the greatest either and made it a little bit harder.

“That’s been a key message: that the conditions will be tough in the middle of the summer in America, and everyone is aware of that. We’re trying to

Heat warning

Blistering temperatures will make it difficult for England, says James

prepare as best we can for that.

“Later kickoffs when it’s not so hot and humid, that would definitely help. For sure. That would definitely help.”

Tuchel has already arranged for a warm-weather training camp in Florida, where they are expected to utilise David Beckham’s Inter Miami facilities, alongside two friendlies in the United States.

However, these plans could face disruption if England players are involved in the Champions League final on May 30, just 11 days before the World Cup begins.

James is optimistic that warm-weather training next summer could ease the transition, but he also disclosed that he has never been consulted by football’s authorities about his perspective on the challenging heat and conditions players will encounter.

He further added: “No, I haven’t been asked about my thoughts on kickoff times. I’m sure they will have asked someone. Maybe managers or people at the clubs. I’m sure they will have got some feedback.

“Warm-weather training camps would help. We finished last season with not much time. We didn’t have time to go away to warm weather, so it was kind of just: finish the Premier League and go to 40°C heat.

“There was no real time to adapt where, hopefully this season, going into the World Cup, the team will have the opportunity to be exposed to heat and different climates. That will hopefully help us prepare better.

“Once you are out there you adapt the longer you are there, when you are settled in once place and try to limit the things you can.” – Express Newspapers

Aubameyang carries hopes for underdogs

PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG could crown a chequered international career with success in the African World Cup playoff in Morocco this week but Gabon are very much the outsiders as four countries look to keep alive hopes of making next year’s finals.

Gabon meet Nigeria in Rabat tomorrow (12.01am), followed by a clash between Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo, in a playoff tournament for the four best runners-up across the nine already-concluded African qualifying groups.

The nine winners are automatically through to next year’s finals in Canada, Mexico and the US but this week’s mini-tournament offers the possibility of a 10th representative for the continent.

Tomorrow’s two winners will meet in a final on Sunday to determine the African side that advances to the inter-continental playoff in March, where the last places for the 48-team World Cup will be determined.

French-born Aubameyang won the African Footballer of the Year award 10 years ago on the back of his scoring exploits with Borussia Dortmund and has been Gabon’s talisman since his first cap in 2009 but never able to steer his country to international success despite them twice hosting the Africa Cup of Nations.

The 36-year-old’s 80-cap tally might have

been substantially higher had he not clashed with administrators and coaches and more than once temporarily retired from international football

But now in the twilight of his career, Aubameyang has a chance to take the small central African country to a first ever World Cup if he can keep up his form of recent months.

The striker scored all four goals as Gabon beat the Gambia 4-3 in last month’s qualifier before finishing second in their group and has pitched in with goals for Olympique de Marseille since his return to Ligue 1 from a spell in Saudi Arabia.

Aubameyang will share the same pitch tomorrow with one of his successors,



2023 Footballer of the Year Victor Osimhen, who leads Nigeria’s hopes of a seventh World Cup finals appearance.

Cameroon have qualified for eight previous World Cups, more than any other African side, but their qualifying campaign has been overshadowed by frequent skirmishes between government-appointed coach Marc Brys and federation president Samuel Eto’o.

DR Congo’s only previous World Cup appearance was over half a century ago when the country was known as Zaire. They were leading their group but let a two-goal advantage at home to Senegal slip and lost 3-2 to finish second and have to try again in the playoffs. – Reuters

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

France aim to secure World Cup place

FRANCE’S World Cup qualifier against Ukraine tomorrow (3.45am Malaysian time) will be a poignant occasion as it takes place on the 10th anniversary of the 2015 Paris terror attacks.

On Friday, Nov 13, 2015, a series of attacks in Paris and around the Stade de France during a friendly match between *Les Bleus* and Germany left a total of 130 people dead.

But one person died near the Stade de France in the northern Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, where multiple explosions took place as suicide bombers attempted to enter the ground.

The stadium was packed with France’s then-president, Francois Hollande, among the close to 80,000 spectators in attendance for the game against Germany – the match was played to a conclusion despite the unfolding events, with France winning 2-0.

A decade on, none of the France players

involved that night will feature against Ukraine across the capital at the Parc des Princes, but national team coach Didier Deschamps remains in charge of *Les Bleus*.

“Deep down, I think it would have been better if we could have avoided playing on Nov 13,” Deschamps admitted as he spoke to reporters last week to announce his squad.

A minute’s silence will be held ahead of kickoff to remember the victims of the attacks, and Deschamps added: “There is an obligation to remember what happened, but there is a football match to be played too.”

The game is potentially decisive for France as they seek to secure qualification for next year’s World Cup in North America.

Les Bleus, winners of the World Cup in 2018 and runners-up in Qatar in 2022, are on top of the four-team Group D with two matches remaining.

They sit three points clear of Ukraine in sec-

ond, meaning a win here will wrap up qualification with a game to spare – but if they slip up they will still be in a position to finish first when they go to Azerbaijan on Monday.

Ukraine realistically have to win the game to stand a chance of beating the French to top spot, and are otherwise aiming to hold off Iceland to finish second and go into playoffs.

Veteran midfielder N’Golo Kante, now playing in Saudi Arabia, was brought back into the France squad for the games and could make his first international appearance in exactly a year.

Randal Kolo Muani of Tottenham Hotspur had been recalled too, but was later forced to withdraw from the squad with a broken jaw.

Ballon d’Or winner Ousmane Dembele of Paris Saint-Germain is a notable injury absentee for France, who won 2-0 against Ukraine in the reverse fixture played in Poland in September. – AFP

SIDENETTING

Ronaldo says WC ‘definitely’ his last

PORTUGUESE superstar Cristiano Ronaldo yesterday said next year’s World Cup would be his last as he winds down one of the all-time great careers. The 40-year-old forward, with more than 950 club and international goals, also said he would retire from football in “one or two years”. “Definitely, yes,” he told a Saudi forum by video link, when asked if 2026 would be his final World Cup. “I’m gonna be 41 years old and I think it will be the moment.” Ronaldo, who began a lucrative stint at Saudi Arabia’s Al Nassr in 2023, also elaborated on comments last week when he said he would retire “soon”. “Let’s be honest, when I mean soon, it’s probably one or two years I’ll still be at the game,” he said.

Raum happy to gel Germany

GERMANY fullback David Raum has grown into a key player for the national team looking to confirm their World Cup qualification but he is happy to leave the spotlight to more talented teammates, he said yesterday. The 27-year-old, who has earned 32 caps, was described as the team’s “chewing gum” by coach Julian Nagelsmann on Monday, for the way he brought his teammates together. “I took this as a compliment. I have now been around for a few years and I know the squad. I have a good connection to all the players,” RB Leipzig defender Raum told a press conference. “I like to spend time with everyone in the team. There is a good connection that is being formed at the moment. We spend a lot of time together,” he said. “I try to be the chewing gum and have a good understanding with all.” His leadership, speed, fierce crosses and relentless defending will be needed with the Germans traveling to Luxembourg on Saturday before hosting Slovakia in their final World Cup qualifiers, and looking for two wins to seal their spot in next year’s tournament.

Cunha credits Devils resurgence for Brazil call-up

MANCHESTER UNITED forward Matheus Cunha has credited the club’s resurgence under Ruben Amorim with helping him cement a spot in Carlo Ancelotti’s Brazil squad ahead of the 2026 Fifa World Cup. The 26-year-old, who has flourished under United manager Amorim this season, has featured in all four of Ancelotti’s squad selections, thanks in part to his versatility, he believes. “Knowing that the manager trusts me to play in multiple positions is important,” Cunha told reporters at a press conference in London yesterday. Brazil face Senegal in a friendly at the Emirates Stadium on Saturday. “It gives me the responsibility to be decisive and to always work hard no matter where he places me. You need to deliver and prove that you’re ready.”

Right call

Not unreasonable for Liverpool goal at City to be ruled out, says Webb



Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk headed goal was disallowed during the match against Man City on Monday. - AFP/IC

SPORTS TOTO RESULTS

DRAW NO: 6047/2025 DATE: 12/11/2025 (WED)
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TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

1st Prize	1057
2nd Prize	3526
3rd Prize	2347
Special	Consolation
5803 3845	4231 4542
0109 1822	5582 1743
8518 3935	5534 5292
1382 7298	4465 0516
1167 6572	3367 9494

4D JACKPOT

Jackpot 1 **RM 14,260,315.19**

1057 3526	3526 1057
1057 2347	2347 1057
3526 2347	2347 3526

Jackpot 2 **RM 754,843.19**

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3rd Prize	2347	+	
4th Prize	Special Prize	+	
5th Prize	Consolation Prize	+	
6th Prize	Any 4D drawn number	+	

TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

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	4TH	5 2 3 3
	2ND	1 2 3 3 1
	5TH	2 3 3
	3RD	8 8 2 3 6
	6TH	3 3

6D	1ST	9 1 9 8 6 0
	2ND	9 1 9 8 6 or 1 9 8 6 0
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REFEREEs' chief Howard Webb said the match officials' decision to rule out Virgil van Dijk's header during Liverpool's defeat at Manchester City on Sunday was "not unreasonable".

Liverpool contacted Webb, the Professional Game Match Officials Limited's chief refereeing officer, on Monday to raise concerns about the interpretation of the offside rules after Van Dijk's header was disallowed by referee Chris Kavanagh.

Andy Robertson was clearly in an offside position when he ducked under the ball, but Liverpool argued he was not in goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma's line of vision and so did not interfere with play.

It was a pivotal moment with the score at 1-0 and afterwards head coach Arne Slot said it was "obvious and clear a wrong decision had been made".

But while Webb said decisions on whether a player is interfering with play or not are "some of the most subjective decisions that we have to make", he felt the match officials made the right decision.

He said on TNT Sports' Match Officials Mic'd Up: "I know that's not a view held by everybody, but I think it's not unreasonable to understand why they would form that conclusion."

"When the player is so close to the goalkeeper, the ball's coming right towards him, he has to duck to get out of the way of the ball and (the match officials) form the conclusion that that impacts Donnarumma's dive towards the ball to make that save."

A statement from the Premier League

Match Centre at the time of the incident claimed Robertson was "deemed to be making an obvious action directly in front of the goalkeeper" but the PA news agency understands Liverpool do not agree with the premise.

They do not accept any elements were met of the criteria relating to the wording of Law 11, with regards to what constitutes offside, and are also of the view that the usual checks and balances in the VAR process did not take place.

The decision on the field was offside, but VAR Michael Oliver did not invite referee Kavanagh to watch the incident again on the pitch-side monitor.

Liverpool have argued a different outcome may have been reached had he been asked to do so.

But Webb added: "Once they've made that onfield decision, the job of the VAR is to look at that and decide was the outcome of offside clearly and obviously wrong?"

"The VAR determines that the outcome of offside is not clearly and obviously wrong and they stay out of it."

After the game, Robertson said he disagreed with the officials' decision to disallow what he felt was a perfectly good goal.

"I think we scored a perfectly good goal at 1-0, which probably completely changes everything if you go into 1-1 when you maybe don't deserve it. Yeah, I don't agree with the excuse they've given."

"Hugely frustrating and it would have got us right back in the game when we probably didn't deserve it; so it was a crucial moment in the game." - The Independent/Agencies

SHORTS

Arsenal ignoring external opinions: Saka

BUKAYO SAKA says his Arsenal teammates are not listening to outside noise because opinions "change like the weather".

His side have started the season well and go into the November international break with a four-point lead at the top of the Premier League.

It could have been six points, but The Gunners were held to a 2-2 draw at Sunderland which ended their 10-game winning run in all competitions.

The result at the Stadium of Light, which has been a stronghold for the Black Cats, led to some consternation in the Arsenal fanbase but Saka is not paying attention.

"People's opinions and thoughts about us change like the weather," the England winger said.

"The most important thing is the changing room, how solid we are, the foundation we have, the belief we have in ourselves."

"How we stick together, through the good and bad, that's the most important. We can't pay attention to the external noise because it's always fluctuating."

"We're good, we're in a good place. The last month or so has gone really well. We've won a lot of games, kept a lot of clean sheets and we're playing well. So it's all good."

"We just have to win every game, that's the

mentality we go into the games with. See where it leaves us.

"We can't get carried away with what people are saying because one day they'll say something, the next day they'll say something different."

Gunners and Eagles matches moved

ARSENAL and Crystal Palace have seen their Premier League matches on the weekend before Christmas moved forward a day to allow "adequate player recovery time" for their Carabao Cup quarterfinal clash three days later.

Arsenal and Palace were due to face away trips on Dec 21 at Everton and Leeds respectively, which meant their Carabao Cup tie Dec 23 would be a second game within 48 hours for both.

They will now play both fixtures on Dec 20, adhering to the Fifa recommendation of at least 72 hours' rest between games.

A statement from the Premier League said: "Player welfare is a priority for the Premier League, and we have therefore granted requests from Arsenal and Crystal Palace to move their respective fixtures. The League would like to thank Leeds United and Everton for their co-operation in accommodating these changes."

The original schedule saw Palace play three times in the space of five days, while Arsenal had their own concerns of playing twice in the space of 48 hours.

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2nd Prize	2906
3rd Prize	9872
Starters	Consolation
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8348 5186	6512 0597
3888 8359	8774 2391
4771 5505	2384 5445
4533 2529	9167 0147

1-3D Jackpot

Jackpot 1	RM9,244,526.80
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4478 + 9872	9872 + 4478
2906 + 9872	9872 + 2906

Jackpot 2 **RM116,631.60**

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3-3D Bonus

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534 478 + ROOSTER		RM91,666.60
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
312 906 + OX		RM530,000.00
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
869 872 + HORSE		RM699,097.10

Starters	Consolation
851 587 347 077	066 140 200 642
638 348 085 186	196 512 210 597
763 888 938 359	928 774 352 391
964 771 455 505	222 384 645 445
434 533 312 529	909 167 810 147

3D

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
478	906	872

3D Jackpot

Jackpot	RM638,035.20
478 + 906 + 872	906 + 872 + 478
478 + 872 + 906	872 + 478 + 906
906 + 478 + 872	872 + 906 + 478

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Red Giants told to submit report on fracas, form

THE Selangor government has requested the Selangor FC team management to present a full report on the commotion that occurred during their Asian Champions League 2 (ACL2) football match against Persib Bandung at the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) Stadium on Thursday (Nov 6).

State Youth, Sports and Entrepreneurship Committee chairman Mohd Najwan Halimi said they viewed the situation seriously and have sought a detailed report to look into the cause and to improve match security and management.

"We have requested Selangor FC to provide a report regarding the incident.

"We want to have a better understanding of the situation to ensure that fan safety and event management are maintained at the highest level," he said.

In the Nov 6 match, the Red Giants lost 3-2 to Persib Bandung and were eliminated from ACL2.

The result earned the wrath of die-hard Selangor fans, who expressed their disappointment by causing a commotion after the match ended, with some even invading the pitch.

Others then gathered outside the main entrance of the stadium, demanding that the club's top management come out to face them.

Mohd Najwan said that the state government has also requested the Selangor FC management to submit a report on the team's dismal performance and re-evaluate the team's strategy following the uproar among supporters over the team's recent poor displays.

"We understand the concerns of the supporters and have asked the team management to submit a detailed report on the team's performance and measures to improve their fortunes," he said, adding that there is no time frame set for the submission of the report.

He said that although Selangor FC now operate as a corporate entity and the state government is not directly involved in the club's internal affairs, his committee still plays a role, including in terms of providing financial support.

"Previously, Selangor FC used to periodically submit performance reports to the state government. It's just that I have now asked the chief executive officer (Dr Johan Kamal Hamidon) to submit a report on what has caused the team's form to dip.

"This report is not aimed at blaming any party. The state government just wants to ensure that any improvements carried out are done in a planned manner for the benefit of the team and the fans," he said. - Bernama

Yeoh hopes MA leadership issue resolved soon

YOUTH and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh told reporters after officiating a new sports complex at an international school here today hopes the current leadership turmoil within Malaysia Athletics (MA) will not affect the preparation of national athletes ahead of the 2025 SEA Games in Thailand next month.

She said with only a few weeks remaining before the Games, the dispute over the legitimacy of certain appointments within the athletics governing body must be resolved immediately.

"As I have said many times before, sports administration and the management of sports associations are very important to ensure athletes are not affected, and that sports can be developed without wasting time on administrative issues like this," Yeoh told reporters after officiating a new sports complex at an international school in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

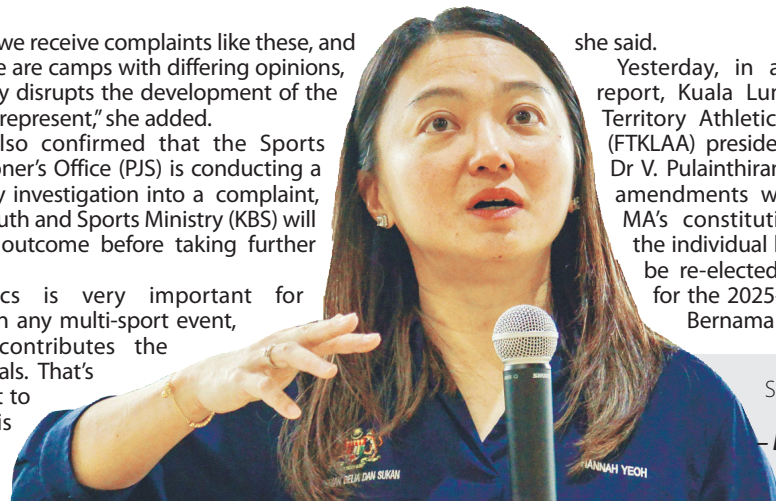
"When we receive complaints like these, and when there are camps with differing opinions, it inevitably disrupts the development of the sport they represent," she added.

Yeoh also confirmed that the Sports Commissioner's Office (PJS) is conducting a preliminary investigation into a complaint, and the Youth and Sports Ministry (KBS) will await the outcome before taking further action.

"Athletics is very important for Malaysia. In any multi-sport event, athletics contributes the most medals. That's why I want to ensure this matter is resolved quickly,"

she said.

Yesterday, in a local news report, Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory Athletics Association (FTKLAA) president Datuk Seri Dr V. Pulainthiran alleged that amendments were made to MA's constitution, allowing the individual leading MA to be re-elected as president for the 2025-2028 term. - Bernama



Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh. - BERNAMAPIC



M. Thinaah

Pearly Tan

Pearly-Thinaah clear first hurdle

Top M'sia women's pair make strong start in Japan

MALAYSIA'S top women's doubles pair, Pearly Tan-M. Thinaah got their Kumamoto Masters Japan 2025 campaign off to a strong start by coming back from a game down to overcome their Japanese rivals at the Kumamoto Prefectural Gymnasium, yesterday.

First seeded Pearly-Thinaah powered through the 18-21 loss of the first game to win the next two games 21-9 and 21-17, securing victory over Mikoto Aiso and Momoha Niimi of Japan in a 53-minute thriller.

Pearly and Thinaah will next face South Korea's Jeong Na Eun and Lee Yeon Woo, whom they have defeated in all three of their previous encounters.

In the men's singles, national shuttler Kok Jing Hong also cruised past India's Kiran George 22-20, 21-10 to book his place in the round of 16 and set up a meeting with sixth-seeded Kenta Nishimoto of Japan.

Meanwhile, in the mixed doubles, Jimmy Wong and Lai Pei Jing advanced after a composed 21-19, 21-15 win over Taiwan's Ming Che Lu and

Hung En-Tzu and will take on the seventh seeds, Ye Hong Wei and Nicole Gonzales Chan of Taiwan next.

In the mixed doubles, Hoo Pang Ron and Cheng Su Yin had to work hard before edging out the Taiwanese duo Wu Hsuan-Yi and Yang Chu Yun 21-18, 18-21, 21-19.

Awaiting them in the second round is the Thai pair Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran.

Also progressing was women's singles player K. Letshanaa, who defeated Azerbaijan's Keisha Fatimah Azzahra 25-23, 21-8, and will face Taiwan's Chiu Pin-Chian in the next round.

Meanwhile, two other national mixed doubles pairs were eliminated in the first round.

Goh Soon Huat and Shevon Lai Jemie lost to the host pair Yuichi Shimogami and Sayaka Hobara 17-21, 13-21, while Wong Tien Ci and Lim Chiew Sien were defeated by the Taiwanese duo Liu Kuang Heng and Jheng Yu Chieh 15-21, 16-21.

Men's singles player Justin Hoh was also knocked out, losing to Japan's Shogo Ogawa 14-21, 9-21. - Bernama

Intan, Kanchenjeet to headline Malayan Tigress SEA Games squad

EXPERIENCED national women's football striker Intan Serah Anisah Zulgafii is among those selected for the centralised training camp of the Malayan Tigress squad in preparation for the 2025 SEA Games in Thailand next month.

In a statement yesterday, the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) said the squad under the guidance of Joel Cornelli also features a United States-based player - Miami

Dade Sharks defender Kanchenjeet Kaur Nanua.

"Out of these 23 players, Cornelli has retained 19 from the 24 players who featured in the two Tier 1 international friendlies against Hong Kong on Oct 22 and 25.

"The Malayan Tigress will take on Bangladesh on Nov 26 and Azerbaijan on Nov 29 in the Tri Nations Women's International Series 2025," the statement read.

Subsequently, the Malayan Tigress will continue their centralised training in Kuala Lumpur before departing for Chonburi, Thailand, on Dec 3 to face Group B opponents - Vietnam on Dec 5, Myanmar on Dec 8, and the Philippines on Dec 11 at the TNSU Stadium in Chonburi.

The group champions and runners-up from Groups A and B will advance to the semifinals on Dec 14, with the final and third-place matches scheduled for Dec 17. - Bernama

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BY RICHARD JOLLY

“WE are in early November and you cannot win the title. You can lose it, but you cannot win it.”

Pep Guardiola may have spoken on Friday with the wisdom of a manager who has won 12 League titles, many of them as a frontrunner.

Or perhaps it was a warning to a Manchester City side who were threatened with a nine-point deficit to Arsenal in the international break.

If so, they responded. After their demolition of Liverpool, they are only four behind. And it is Liverpool who, eight adrift, in eighth place, feel out of the reckoning.

A week that brought a wonderful win over Real Madrid has lent itself to contrasting conclusions: that Liverpool are back, and then that they are back in the pack, distanced by Arsenal and City.

Given a £450 million (RM2.6b) spend, theirs is the most expensive title defence ever. It may have come to one of the earliest ends.

“The last thing I should think about now is the title race,” said Arne Slot. “The reality is we are eighth now.”

A five-point lead has disappeared, replaced by five defeats in six League games. “Too many,” said Slot. In every respect, too.

The last champions to lose five of their first 11 games were Leicester in 2016-17, yet they were an extraordinary anomaly in winning the League.

Chelsea lost six of their opening 11 matches in 2015-16, but that, in Antonio Conte’s immortal phrase, was the “Mourinho season”.

For Liverpool, this was supposed to be the Slot season; the year the manager who had won the League with Jurgen Klopp’s players repeated the feat with his own. Instead, there is a dramatic difference between Slot’s start and his present.



Reality check

Liverpool can forget about the title – they have bigger issues to solve

Liverpool only lost four League games last season, and two of them were after the title was clinched. They are outnumbered by five now. Include those May losses and it is seven defeats in their last 15 League games.

They have a mere three clean sheets in that time, with 27 goals conceded. They have lost their last four on the road, and, going back to last season, six of eight.

As a whole, it points to a team who are too easy to beat, who have lost

their solidity. They looked rediscovered against Aston Villa and Real. Maybe City was a defeat with a difference.

If Liverpool had been too open in many a recent reverse, perhaps they were too cautious at the Etihad, bringing insufficient attacking threat.

Which, like much, is damning. City fielded converted midfielders at full-back, in Matheus Nunes and Nico O’Reilly.

Their immediate opponents were the £100 million (RM580m) man,

Florian Wirtz, and Liverpool’s leading scorer of the last three decades, Mohamed Salah. Nunes and O’Reilly won their respective duels.

Wirtz was taken off to a rather predictable chant of “what a waste of money”. Slot opted not to bring on Alexander Isak, who has just returned to fitness, which may have spared the £125 million (RM725m) man the same song.

The German had played well against Real, presumably earning him selection ahead of Cody Gakpo,

but it remains the case that Slot is reluctant to pick him as a No. 10.

That title defence could, in effect, be over before Wirtz has contributed a Premier League goal or assist, or Isak a goal. The Swede has started three League games. Liverpool have lost all.

It is true to say that neither was bought merely for the opening three months of their debut season, yet those three months are likely to mean that Joe Fagan’s class of 1984 will remain the last Liverpool team to retain the title.

So far, Slot’s £225 million (RM1.3b) outlay on the record-breaking duo has bought a negligible contribution to the Premier League. Remarkably, when Hugo Ekitike went off on Sunday, Liverpool, after committing £204 million (RM1.18b) to strikers in the summer, had no striker on the pitch.

In the bigger picture, they are far from the only ones at fault. Ibrahima Konate’s decidedly mixed performances means Liverpool have an erratic figure in a position where they need certainty.

Dominik Szoboszlai remains the outstanding candidate to be named their player of the season; thus far, however, the shortlist is precisely that.

It is a reason why Slot is right: Liverpool cannot yet think about winning the title. And yet they began as favourites for many. Reigning champions often do.

Go back five years and Liverpool’s last title defence was destroyed by defensive injuries, yet even then, they were top at Christmas.

Now they have spent more money as champions, suffered less from injuries, and have fewer legitimate excuses.

And yet, after 11 games, they have lost five – and if there are red ribbons on the trophy in May, they will surely be those of Arsenal. – The Independent



Alcaraz wins thriller

Story on page 28



Right call

Story on page 30



Pearly-Thinaah clear first hurdle

Story on page 31